

5-2 8 3-9

THE VEDANTA KESARI

“LET THE LION OF VEDANTA ROAR.”

VOL. XIV.

MAY 1927—APRIL 1928.



PUBLISHED BY SRI RAMAKRISHNA MATH
MYLAPORE, MADRAS.

Inland annually Rs. 3.
Single Copy As. 6.

Foreign annually Rs. 4-8.)
(† 2. or Sh. 8.



THE VEDANTA KESARI

VOL. XIV.

INDEX

	PAGE.
Age of the Sudras, The—	
<i>By R. Ramakrishnan, B. A.</i>	68
Apocalypse Unveiled, The—	
<i>By Swami Prabhavananda</i>	102, 141
Concept of the Self—	
<i>By Swami Sharvananda</i>	93
Devi, Saradamani—	
<i>By Ramananda Chatterjee</i>	105
Editorial Notes 5, 46, 85, 125, 165, 206, 246, 304	
327, 382, 405, 446.	
Experience as the One Self; The Doctrine of—	
<i>By Prof. K. Sundararama Iyer, M. A.</i>	17,
255, 412	
Emancipated Soul According to Vedanta, The	
State of—	
<i>By Sridhar Majumdar, M. A.</i>	334
Hindu View of Life, The—	
<i>By Swami Vedantananda</i>	144
Hindu Social Reform, The Problem of—	
<i>By Swami Iswarananda</i>	337, 364
Ideal Humanity—	
<i>By R. Ramakrishnan, B. A.</i>	259
India Can Regain Her Lost Position, How—	
<i>By S. S. Setlur, M. A., LL.B.</i>	351
Indian Woman and the Indian Home, The—	
<i>By Sister Devamata</i>	464
Karma-yoga—	
<i>By K. S. Ramaswami Sastri, B. A., B. L.</i>	285
Life Sketch of Ramdas—	
<i>By Swami Gunatitananda</i>	299, 344
Maya, The Meaning of—	
<i>By B. Chandrasekharia, M. A.</i>	58
Mysticism—	
<i>By T. S. Avinashilingam, B. A., B. L.</i>	97
Notes and Comments 33, 74, 149, 193, 229, 269, 312,	
354, 387, 433	
News and Reports 38, 77, 116, 159, 197, 236, 277,	
319, 359, 397 438, 477	

Prayer	....	1, 41, 81, 121, 161, 201, 241, 281, 321, 361, 401, 441
Progress in India, The Idea of—		
<i>By Principal Kamakhya Nath Mitra, M. A.</i>	....	111
Psychodynamics, Studies in—		
<i>By S. Sankara Menon, B. A., B. L.</i>	....	417
Religious Practice, Need of—		
<i>By Swami Atulananda</i>	....	12, 54
Ramakrishna Paramahansa—		
<i>By Nagenbra Nath Gupta</i>	....	71
Religion of Vedanta, The—		
<i>By Sridhar Majumdar, M. A.</i>	....	461
Reviews and Notices	....	37, 156, 235, 274, 356, 395
Spiritual Value—		
<i>By A. Govindacharya Swami</i>	....	135
Sister Nivedita's Life, The Story of—		
<i>By Swami Vedantananda</i>	....	176
Swami Saradananda—		
<i>By a Devotee</i>	....	221
Sister Nivedita, Reminiscences of—		
<i>By Prof. Jadu Nath Sarkar, M. A.</i>	....	266
Self-knowledge—		
<i>By Swami Atulananda</i>	....	290
Sankaracharya's Life, Story of Sri—		
<i>By Swami Atulananda</i>	....	359, 426, 471
Soul of India, The—		
<i>By P. N. Srinivasachariar, M. A.</i>	....	375
Spiritual Talks of Swami Brahmananda	....	2, 42, 82, 122, 162, 202, 242, 282, 322, 362, 402, 442
Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa as an Incarnation of the Indian Genius—		
<i>By K. S. Ramaswami Sastri, B. A., B. L.</i>	....	452
Talk to Students, A—		
<i>By Swami Atulananda</i>	....	186, 213
Upanishadic Revelation of Truth, The—		
<i>By K. S. Ramaswami Sastri, B. A., B. L.</i>	....	131
Vivekananda, Reminiscences of Swami—		
<i>By A. Srinivasa Pai, B. A., B. L.</i>	....	24
War, Seeds of—		
<i>By. Rev. Charles E. Jafferson, D. D., LL. D.</i>		29

THE VEDANTA KESARI

"Let the lion of Vedanta roar."

"Let me tell you, strength, strength is what we want
And the first step in getting strength is to uphold
The Upanishads and believe that 'I am the Atman,'"

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

VOLUME XIV

MAY 1927

[NUMBER 1

PRAYER.

ॐ

नम आत्मप्रदीपाय साक्षिणे परमात्मने ।
नमो गिरां विद्वराय मनसश्चेतसामपि ॥
नमः शान्ताय घोराय गुदाय गुणकर्मणे ।
निर्विशेषाय शान्ताय नमो ज्ञानघनाय च ॥
नमो नमस्तेऽखिलकारणाय निष्कारणायऽद्वैतकारणाय ।
सर्वगमाप्ताय महार्णवाय नमोऽपवर्गाय परायणाय ॥

Salutations unto the Lord Who is the Light of the soul, the Witness and the Supreme Spirit. Salutations unto Him who is beyond all speech, nay, even beyond the reach of the mind and the heart.

Salutations unto Him Who is ever peaceful, Who is terrific, Who is inscrutable, Who acts in accordance with principles, Who is without difference, Who is even-minded and who is intelligence personified.

Salutations unto Thee Who art the Cause of all, Who art Thyself causeless, Who art the wonderful Origin of the whole creation, Who art the goal of all scriptures, the Mighty Ocean of Existence, the Bestower of emancipation and the Great Refuge of all creatures.

SRI MAD BHAGAVATAM—VIII, 3.

SPIRITUAL TALKS OF SWAMI BRAHMANANDA

(At the Belur Math)

WHEN once you get established in meditation, you will come to know how sweet is the resulting bliss. Days and nights pass away unnoticed. You feel that you are floating in an ocean of infinite bliss. Don't speak about your experiences to everybody, least of all to those of a contrary nature. It may do harm to your growth. But if you exchange your experiences with one of a like nature with yours and in harmony with your temperament, you may be helped in your progress. Both of you are travellers on the same path. Perhaps your companion has already walked along it and is aware of its dangers and difficulties. Benifited by his experiences, you might be able to avoid those dangers and difficulties.

Do you know the object of *satsanga* (company of holy men)? The experiences of holy men are a great help to a Sadhaka. If you visit a new place and have the help of a good guide, you will be able to see within a short time all that is worth seeing there; also you will be saved from all the dangers and difficulties into which strangers are likely to fall. In a similar way, from the company of advanced Sadhakas, you will be able to gather many valuable hints, and your spiritual struggle will be very much simplified. The intelligence of an ordinary man does not go very far. Life is short. And many things have to be done. So you must find out the best way of doing your work within as short a time as possible. Hence the need of holy company.

This life may come to an end after some years or even to-day, and nobody knows when the end will come. It is better to get equipped for the journey as soon as

possible. Your going empty-handed to a strange and unknown place would mean much suffering and sorrow. Birth must inevitably lead to death. Death means going to an unknown place. Somehow or other you should get yourself fully provided for this journey. Finish all your duties here and be ever ready for the great *call*. If you do that you will be able to depart from this world with a smiling face. * * * * * When you have finished all your work, there is no fear for you. Then you know that you are well provided for the journey.

You have seen that children, while gyrating round a pillar keep a very firm hold of it. You too should by all means hold firmly the Pillar of life (God). Have faith in yourself. Believe, 'I am a man, I can do anything.' With such a strong faith in yourself forge ahead and you will attain to your life's goal and be blessed for ever.

Fear is the greatest sin. Banish all fear and weakness from your mind. When the desire to realise God is alive in you, and when fortunately you have got opportunities to lead a spiritual life, put forth all your might and get a taste of the Supreme Bliss. The cycle of births and deaths is full of misery. Make the best use of your present life. Get yourself free from this cycle, and become the eternal companion of the Lord.

Unless you can fix your mind on God, you will find it very difficult to keep yourself pure in this world. Mahamaya (The Divine Mother) sports in diverse ways, and it is no joke to withstand the innumerable temptations created by her. Lust, anger, greed etc. are almost invincible, and to conquer them is no child's play. Through the strength of the Lord alone, and not by any other means, can you cut the meshes of Maya and make yourself free.

Therefore I urge you to become strong with the might of the Lord. Then you can pass the rest of your life as he wills and directs. It is not given to ordinary

mortals to know God through their own exertion. They alone can understand Him, to whom out of His infinite grace he reveals Himself. Only such fortunate persons become free from the net of Samsara and obtain pure devotion and liberation.

You must have a routine for spiritual practices. *Nishtia* (steadfastness) is a very important factor, without which no great achievement is possible. Steadfastness must be of such a nature that, wherever and under whatever circumstances you may be, the rules that you have laid down for yourself, must be observed at any cost. For your meditation, your study, your reflection, your sleep etc., you must have certain definite hours. If you lead an irregular life, you cannot succeed in anything. Whether it is physical or mental development, the only way to attain it is to lead a strictly regular life. If a clock goes out of order, the watch-repairer sets it right, and then it continues to keep correct time. So with the mind of man. It has become irregular owing to various reasons. By keeping company with good men, you must get your mind set properly. If you try to mould your life according to instructions of holy men, you may easily avoid the pitfalls and temptations of life. Following in their footsteps you too will reach the same goal attained by them and fulfil your life's purpose.

So long as your mind is not controlled there is a great need for you to observe certain definite rules. Without them you can never get mastery over your mind.

The natural tendency of the mind is to shirk work, but when you have made a routine you must tell your mind, "You are subject to this rule now ; whether you like it or not, you must observe it." In this way, you should try to bring the mind under control. When you have succeeded in this, you need not observe any more rules. They will fall off of their own accord.

Life is fast flowing away like a stream. The day that is gone cannot be recalled. So make the best use of your time. Crying 'alas!' at the last moment will be of no avail. Be therefore up and doing. Make up your mind to realise your goal or die in the attempt. Death is certain. It may come to-day or to-morrow. If you lose your life in trying to attain God, it is no loss but a positive gain.

Try to fix your mind on the Lord and firmly resolve, "Him I must realise." What happiness is there in this world ! It is all nothing but sorrow and misery. Treat it as worthless. You must go beyond all sorrow and misery. If you get a glimpse of God, you will have infinite Bliss, and sensuous pleasures will lose all charm for you. When you have once come to the Lord, there is no room for fear or anxiety. Give up all things of the world and dwell on Him and Him alone.

EDITORIAL NOTES

OUR NEW YEAR

With the current issue, the Vedanta Kesari steps on the threshold of the fourteenth year of its life. And on this auspicious ushering in of the new year we offer our reverential salutations to the Benign Providence whose unfailing grace has sustained us in the midst of them any difficulties through which we have had to pass. We also convey our hearty greetings to all our readers and friends whose unstinted support enabled us to render our humble service to the cause of the Vedanta. The success so far achieved makes us hope for a better prospect in the immediate future. Our object is not to establish a sect or a creed. We stand for the eternal verities of the Vedanta, and on these we want to build up a world-wide spiritual brotherhood whose foundations have been well and truly laid by Sri Ramakrishna and his illustrious disciple Swami Vivekananda. Through the will of the Lord, the message of the Vedanta is spreading far and wide. Earnest seekers after the Truth are responding to its call in an ever-increasing number. And with the expansion of its spiritual kingdom the task of its humble workers is also growing heavier. It has been our proud privilege

to receive valuable help from many a quarter, expected and unexpected. But the cause of the Vedanta is a cause universal, and as such the demand on our service is steadily on the increase. To cope successfully with the growing work, we need the hearty co-operation of all our sisters and brothers who have come to look upon the Vedanta and the *Vedanta Kesari* as their own. May the Lord bless us all to follow the path of service that has been ours with renewed strength and devotion !

THE MENACE OF WESTERN MILITARISM

The whole world is passing through a tremendous unrest that is assuming greater and greater proportions with the flow of time. Class strifes, communal dissensions, international discords are troubling to the utmost the soul of humanity. Apart from the vast economic and cultural contests manifesting themselves everywhere, the world wide conflict between the conquering white race and the subjected "coloured" race has banished peace from the face of the earth. Besides, the evil spirit of aggression and exploitation, that reigns supreme in the hearts of the competing nations of the West, is urging them on to multiply engines of destruction on a gigantic scale. Almost all the Western nations are secretly preparing themselves for a terrible world-war that is sure to throw into insignificance the last Great War out of the horrors of which mankind has scarcely recovered itself. There is a mad rush among the so called Great Powers for increasing their military, naval and aerial resources. Countries that proclaim with a loud voice the ideals of liberty and equality are developing a most virulent form of militarism which threatens their very existence as nations. Besides, they have become a source of great danger to all the "coloured" races of the world. As an American divine has said very poignantly, "There is no 'yellow peril'. There is no 'Brown peril'. There is no 'Black peril'. There is only one peril, and that is the 'White peril,' and singularly enough the white race is the only race that claims to follow the Prince of Peace."

AWAKENING OF ASIA

Nations, like individuals, have their periods of activity and periods of rest. After a strenuous life covering many centuries, the Asiatic races went to sleep. When they awoke they found that a strange people from the West had invaded their lands, and were trying to bring about not only the political and economic but cultural enslavement as well. The glamour of the civilisation of these conquerors possessing intense energy, wonderful mastery over nature and mighty power of organisation, so

captivated the minds of the still drowsy Orientals that they began to pay them a blind worship. But with the dawn of the normal consciousness there followed the great disillusionment. The peace-loving Asiatics—the poor victims of unprovoked aggression—came to discover that the Western invaders were fighting nations who had converted their religion into a fighting religion, using their religious preachers as instruments of furthering their material conquest. First came the clergy, then the trader, then the gun-boat and then the conquest—this has been the invariable order in which many a "heathen" land was subjugated. The Asiatics came to realise through their great sufferings the evils of Western Civilisation, and it is no wonder that they began to question seriously its vaunted superiority. But the severest blow to Western prestige came from the Great War that laid bare the dark spots of Occidental Civilisation,—the abominable propaganda of lies deliberate dishonesty of Governments, wild hatred of the enemy and reckless destruction of human life. As a result, senseless admiration has given place to a general dislike for everything Western. At the same time the Asiatic nations have become more alive than before to the importance of their rich heritage, and are anxious to protect it by all means from foreign aggression.

THE GREAT STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM

The soul of Asia has awakened, and no power on earth can keep her in slavery any more. Everywhere there is an yearning for a new order, and the one thought common to the Asiatic nations is how to free themselves from alien domination. To attain this end Japan has gone so far as to assimilate Western militarism and it was after she had "learned to kill," that she came to be accepted as a "civilised" nation. Turkey too had to meet brute force by brute force in order to regain her status as an independent nation. The Christian missionaries have been proclaiming to the Asiatics—"Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth." But unfortunate China found to her great cost that to be meek and remain meek is the surest way to "the disinheritance of the earth." So at last the meek Chinese, on whom were forced missionaries and opium at the point of the bayonet, have taken recourse to arms. A great Chinaman has remarked with a deep pathos—"No Oriental nation can have the respect of the Christian nations of the West unless it is armed. There is nothing then for us but to arm. We must go contrary to the traditions of our people and to the precepts of the greatest of our sages in order to secure justice at the hands of the nations of the West." Militarism is breeding militarism

everywhere. If all the peoples of Asia, Africa and other lands under foreign exploitation, take up arms against their aggressors, the whole world will be converted into a vast military camp. And with all the dreadful weapons of destruction invented by the Western brain, mankind will be heading fast for Armageddon. Is there really no way out from this cosmic catastrophe?—this is the most vital question that should occupy the minds of the thoughtful men and women of all countries.

WEST TURNING TO THE EAST

While statesmen and diplomats, who hold in their hands the destinies of nations, are engaged in maintaining an armed peace and are preparing for another devastating war, the teeming millions of all countries in the East and the West are tired of militarism and are sincerely hankering for permanent peace. As Mr. Bertrand Russel points out, even in imperialistic Great Britain "a large proportion of those who fought in the Great War are determined never to fight again, whatever the issue." There is a steadily growing discontent in the minds of men and women in the West against their militaristic civilisation that puts too great an emphasis on externals. "In India and China," frankly acknowledges a Western thinker, "the stress is different, the rhythm is strange to us, and our senses, deafened and deadened by the Clamour and poisons of our civilisation, are not attuned to those harmonies." There is a growing appreciation of the East. Nay, many have lost their faith in Christianity for its utter failure in putting an end to war and are now turning to the East for a new light. "Now, since the war has revealed," observes an American writer, "the pitiable bankruptcy of Western ecclesiasticism as a saving force, the Occident is more than ever receptive to spiritual influences from Asia—the venerable mother of religions; the world itself may find renewal of youth in the waters of these life-giving springs which have been flowing through the ages from the slopes of the Himalayas."

INDIA'S CONTROL OF MILITARISM

Of all the countries in Asia, it is to India that many in the West are looking up for a saving message. "Knowledge of the Vedas," says an Occidental writer, "might be of importance to us in this restless age. From them we might gain fresh light on the secrets of poise and peace." Indeed, India has never been a conquering nation in the political sense. And those of her children who spread her spiritual message in foreign lands never made their religion subserve any material end. There

must be something in the ancient religion of this land that has all along succeeded in keeping militarism under its full control and in establishing a relation of love with the neighbouring countries. Hinduism might have overdone its work of taming the brute, but there is no doubt that it possesses the surest cure for megalomania that has bred violence and aggression in the heart of the West. Like a potent medicine which cures a disease but brings about some morbid condition in the patient through its immoderate use, the highest ideals of Hinduism as represented in the Vedanta and Buddhism have removed from the nature of its votaries the poisons of ferocity and aggression, but have by its misapplication tended to make them too mild and passive. But the defect lies not in the religion but in its indiscriminate application to individuals and communities. Maddened with the wine of imperialism, the nations of the West may fail to recognise the great transforming power of the religion of a subject race. But instances of conquering the conqueror are not rare in the history of the human race. Greece conquered her victor Rome by the mighty influence of her culture. India herself witnessed a similar phenomenon, times without number. Hinduism completely assimilated all the invading hordes that overran the land from time to time before the Muhammedan conquest of the country. And history seems to be repeating itself now on a somewhat different but grander scale than before.

THE INFLUENCE OF VEDANTA

The universal ideals of Hinduism are fast spreading in many a Western land, and are converting thousands of men and women into its staunch adherents. The author of "Christian Thought and Hindu Philosophy" is not to be blamed if he "is amazed to find the extent to which Hindu Pantheism has already begun to permeate the religious conceptions of America and even England." But this is not the first time in human history that the Vedantic thoughts are influencing other religions and their votaries. The achievements of the Vedanta Philosophy in this direction is by no means small. It gave birth in the post-Vedic age to Buddhism—the first missionary religion of the world.

It influenced some of the early Christian schools including the Gnostics as well as many systems of Western philosophy, ancient and medieval. It also had its effect on Islam. "Does not Sufism," asks Prof. S. Khuda Buksh, "owe its origin mainly to the school of Indian Philosophy known as the Vedanta School?" Nor is this all. Vedantic thoughts have inspired many of the modern Europeans, poets, philosophers and writers. Consciously or uncon-

sciously Vedānta is fertilising the Western mind. In the words of Sir John Woodroffe, "India, true to its principles (in this matter different from those which have prevailed in the West) will never force itself by violence on any. It asks only a fair hearing, having trust that the truths, of which it believes itself to be the guardian, will of their own strength establish themselves. Truth, in whatever form, needs nothing but itself to win the minds and hearts of men. And so we see once more Indian ideas (without material aid such as that possessed by Christian Missions) commencing to influence the world thus rousing to strengthened combat all those who from racial, political, and religious motives are opposed to them." In spite of all oppositions Vedantic ideas are gaining ground both in India and in the West, and are bringing solace and hope to thousands of men and women who have found it impossible to subscribe to narrow creeds and dogmas passing under the name of religion.

THE MISSION OF VEDANTA

The demon of aggression has brought a terrible political and economic strife into the world. And this together with the great conflict of culture that is going on everywhere has divided mankind into numerous separate communities constantly warring with one another. Religions that support aggression and strife speak of a brotherhood possible only within their respective folds and through the acceptance of their respective prophets and doctrines have no chance of effecting the union of all sections of humanity who are apt to follow not one but different teachers and doctrines. The hope of the future lies in the religion which with its all-embracing ideals is capable of satisfying the highest spiritual aspirations of men and women and help them to live in peace and amity. The Vedānta possesses the great virtue of meeting this demand for a new order of things, and has already begun its work in this direction. Its noble doctrine of the potential divinity of man is creating a respect for human life as such, and is thereby spiritualising the relationship between man and man,—a thing which creedal religions have utterly failed to do. Its message of Unity in diversity possesses as expressed by many scholars and philosophers of the West, "a great ethical value in cementing the ties of friendship and brotherhood between distant peoples" that are in reality inseparable parts of the One Cosmic Being, "who with hands and feet everywhere, with eyes, heads and mouths everywhere, with ears everywhere—pervades the whole universe." Its spirit of universalism, which accepts all religions as different paths leading to the same Truth, is

slowly and silently promoting the spirit of fellowship among the followers of the various religions of the world. No wonder that after coming in touch with the current of religious life in India a great American missionary observed—"The Christianity of the future is going to be enriched and enlarged from what we may learn from the Orient." Observes another—"This System (Vedanta) is not to be regarded as a mere curiosity, as a speculative vagary.....The reality of the One is the truth which the East may well teach us."

INDIA AND WORLD-PEACE

A great cultural synthesis is going on all over the world. Instead of slavishly imitating things western, the Indians are now trying to preserve and realise the essentials of their civilisation and to assimilate at the same time the best in the culture of others. In Europe and America, the thoughtless disregard for Hindu culture has yielded place to an intelligent appreciation of India's spiritual greatness. The Westerners are making all efforts to propagate their scientific culture in India. It is now incumbent on the sons of India to preach to the West the marvellous spiritual culture of their motherland. India's spiritual culture must transform world-civilisation and bring in a new age of perfect harmony.

It was to carry on this great spiritual mission of India that Swami Vivekananda repeatedly urged his countrymen—"Materialism and all its miseries can never be conquered by materialism. Armies when they attempt to conquer armies only multiply and make brutes of humanity. Spirituality must conquer the West. To give and take is the law of nature. We also must follow that law...They (The Westerners) have been for a long time giving you of what wealth they possess and now is the time for you to share your priceless treasure with them. And you will see how their feelings of hatred will be quickly replaced by those of faith, devotion and reverence towards you, and how they will do good to your country even unasked." May the noble message of the Rishis of India permeate the East and West and bring into existence a new civilisation with spirituality as its dominating note! And may it tend to establish a better understanding, and with it permanent peace and harmony on earth!

स्वस्ति प्रभाभ्यः परिपालयन्तां न्याय्येन मार्गेण महीं महीशाः ।

गोब्राह्मणेभ्यः शुभमस्तु नित्यं लोकास्समस्ताः सुखिनो भवन्तु ॥

May God betide all people ! May the sovereigns rule the earth, following the righteous path ! May prosperity ever reign over the land for the benefit of all creatures ! And may all worlds prosper in peace and plenty ! Om Shantih ! Shantih !! Shantih !!!,

NEED OF RELIGIOUS PRACTICE

By Swami Atulananda

It is sometimes thought that obedience to ethical laws, practice of religious injunctions, external worship and the like belong to the lowest stage of spiritual life.

We live in an age of intellectuality, and everything in life, even our religious conception, is subjected to the test of the intellect. What the intellect cannot grasp and explain, is forthwith put aside as useless, as fit only for the ignorant and superstitious. Intellect rules supreme, it is like a brandishing sword threatening to cut asunder the simple faith that hitherto has worked such miracles in the field of religion and spiritual life.

The religious aspirant now-a-days seem to be satisfied with an intellectual grasp of his subject. He wants to understand religion, he wants to explain to himself and others the subtle questions regarding existence, nature, man and God. Religious life is gradually turned into an intellectual life, pure and simple.

We have been fed with the highest intellectual conceptions of life, with the loftiest explanations of the verities of Existence to such an extent that we have become theoretical philosophers, considering ourselves superior to the simple-hearted, but thoroughly sincere devotee of the past.

This spirit of the age has dealt severe blows to the practical side of religion. We live on theories, disdaining the simple as well as the more severe practices of religion. These practices are for the simple, we think, for the common folk who cannot soar with us to the highest pinnacle of philosophic understanding.

The result is, that our life has become devoid of the desire to *live* our philosophy, to make life the test of our belief, to aspire to the practice and realisation of religion. And under the mask of spiritual freedom, sometimes the grossest license is practised. The intellect is satisfied, and the heart no longer yearns for God-realisation, for the deep and blissful feeling experienced by the devotee. Our religion has become a skeleton, a corpse, on which we place the flowers of intellectual attainment.

But intellectual understanding alone cannot satisfy the heart. We cannot live by intellect alone. The heart, the seat of our feelings and emotions, is closer to us than our intellect. When the heart is not satisfied man is unhappy. And the intellect cannot bring peace to the heart.

Where is our philosophy, when circumstances over which we have no control throw us into an abyss of despair? Where is our reason when death robs us of our most beloved? We argue, we try to convince ourselves that disease and pain and suffering are only transitory, that we are the Spirit beyond all suffering, that there is no death for the soul, but let us be sincere—in how many cases does this intellectual balm heal the wounds of our aching heart? In very few, indeed!

The reason is near at hand. It is because our reasoning is not based on actual experience. Our words are hollow, meaningless and lifeless, for they flow from a source devoid of substance. The shallow pool of intellect cannot quench the burning fire of sorrow. It is heart alone that can speak to heart, feeling alone can bring comfort to the sorrowing heart. And real feeling is the outcome of experience. Unless we have experienced the full meaning of our words we cannot convey that meaning to others, we cannot relieve the sorrow of others. And the ache of our own heart is not cured by our philosophical formulas.

Religion, the highest of all sciences, the practical philosophy of life, is entirely a question of realisation, of actual experience. Unless it be that it can never be a practical guidance and comfort in our lives, here or hereafter.

Religion, to have any real value, must be practical, it must lend itself to be carried out under all conditions of life. And only to those who make it practical will religion yield its fruit. Talk cannot satisfy. We must practise religion to experience the peace of mind for which we are all seeking, and which religion holds out to us.

It has been said, many ages ago, that truth is not revealed to him who only discusses about truth.

In the Chhandogya Upanishad, after laying down the rules of a religious life, the Rishi exclaims, "He who behaves thus, all his life, reaches the world of Brahman. He is free, he does not return to this world. Yea, he does not return." Our only safe course lies therefore in keeping to the rules laid down by spiritual men, by men "Who are versed in the scriptures, who are themselves without taint, who are free from worldly desires, who are the knowers of Brahman."

It is, of course, much easier to talk about religion than it is to practise it. Read some books on the Vedanta philosophy, and you will have an intellectual understanding of what religion means. It will give you intellectual satisfaction, and you may be able to hold your own in philosophical discussions. This in itself is good. But the danger lies here, that this intellectual satisfaction stands in the way of a deeper yearning of the heart to taste *that* of which philosophy only speaks. Sri Ramakrishna used to illustrate this state of mind with a story. Two men went to a mango orchard. One of the men made a thorough study of the orchard. When he left the orchard he knew how the trees were planted, how high they grew, how many fruits each tree should bear, and he could give a minute description of the size, shape and colour of the fruit. But he was so busy with his study that he forgot to taste the fruit. He went home and wrote a long and learned treatise on mango culture. The other man was of a simple turn of mind. He did not care for the investigations of his friend. He climbed a tree and ate the fruit. When he left the orchard he knew only one thing, namely, that the mango was the most delicious fruit he had ever tasted.

Here we see the difference between the practical man and the theoretical man. Thus it is in religion. A man may be able to give learned discourses on religion and still have never tasted the sweet peace and contentment that arises from communion with God. Another may not be able to explain any of the mysteries of the spiritual life, but having tasted the fruit of religion lives in perfect peace. "If thou didst know the whole Bible by heart," says Thomas a Kempis, "and the sayings of all the philosophers, what would it all profit thee without the love of God and His grace? Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity, besides loving God and serving Him alone." And in the Upanishads we read, "He who thinks that he knows Brahman well, does not know It. But It is known to him who thinks that he does not know It." He who has realised the truth knows that the intellect cannot know God. God is beyond the intellect, but He is very close to the loving heart. "This Atman is not to be attained by the study of the Vedas alone nor by the intellect, nor by learning. He can be attained only by him who sincerely seeks to know Him. To him the Atman reveals Its true nature."

Practice alone can lift us to that higher sphere where we can reach out and take possession of truth, where truth becomes our own, "Even as the fruit is our own when we hold it in our hand."

God must be seen, the sages tell us, He must be perceived, we must taste the sweetness of His presence. Then we can say that we experience religion. And that comes only after faithful practice.

About what the practices are, and what is meant by living the religious life, the scriptures do not leave us in the dark. They point out, step by step, the path that the religious aspirant must tread. All scriptures are uniform in their declarations that truthfulness, chastity, control of mind, meditation love towards God and unselfishness must be practiced to attain spiritual realisation. Without the practice of these, no progress can be made. And, says the Katha Upanishad, "No one who has not abandoned sin and bad conduct can know God."

But as regards the special form our religious exercises shall take the Vedanta is the most liberal. Practise whatever best suits you, whatever is most congenial to your temperament. In the 12th chapter of the Bhagavad Gita, for example, Sri Krishna points out the different forms our practices may take. "Follow this path or that," he says, "it matters not. So long as you practise any of the methods you are dear to me, and I shall liberate you from sin."

We are not all constituted alike, we differ widely in our temperamental make-up, so there must be wide margins between which we can move freely. Let our practice be through the performance of our daily duties as a worship to God, or let us perform special acts of devotion, it matters not what they are so long as the heart really thirsts for God. And the more intense and sincere our practice is, the sooner the goal will be reached.

From this we see that we should never be proud and think that our practice is the highest and all other practices are inferior. Our own practice may be the best for us. But let us never forget that other practices are just as efficacious if carried out in the right spirit.

And here it may be well to call your attention to a mistake that is often made. We are all apt to think that the highest practices are suitable to us. We disdain the difficult routine of starting at the beginning, and at once we take the stand of the Jnani, of him who follows the path of wisdom, where everything is regarded as a dream and God in His absolute aspect is worshipped. It is but natural for human nature to aspire for the highest. And it is but natural for a human being to think that he, if no one else, is fit for the highest.

It is here that the danger lies. We all want to practise the highest. But are we fit for it ? Do we understand the real meaning of these highest practices ? The highest stand the Yogi can take is to identify himself with God. But can *we* do that ? Can we say with the strength of conviction, "Yes, I am God" ? Do we know what God is ? If not, how can we say in all sincerity that we are God ?

What does it involve ? To the perfect Yogi the body is of no consequence. He knows that he is the Atman and not the body. He has realised it. Pleasure and pain, heat and cold, health and disease, are all mental or physical conditions. And the Yogi disregarding the claims of body and mind, does not heed these conditions. He always lives in the realm of the spirit, whether the body lives or dies is indifferent to him.

Is it so with us ? If so, then we are Jnanis. If not, to say "I am God," has no meaning and will not lead us higher unless with the words we join the acts, unless we really try to live up to this truth. Then no complaint should ever fall from our lips. We should remain unmoved under all conditions, always happy in the thought that we are the Atman.

This is, certainly, a most exalted state, it is freedom even in this life. But before we take this highest stand it may be well to consider if we are fit for it. Do we not require to practise a good deal before we can say that we are beyond the ordinary practices ?

How did the Yogis become perfect ? By simply saying, "I am the Atman" ? Certainly not. Read the lives of these godly men and you will find that only after long years of the greatest austerities, after days and nights of deep meditation, after fulfilling the laws of Yoga in every respect, did they become perfect Jnanis.

(To be concluded.)

THE DOCTRINE OF EXPERIENCE AS THE ONE SELF

By Prof. K. Sundararama Aiyar, M. A.

VIII MĀYA (OR AJĀNANA)

The modern Pragmatic school of thinkers deny and even ridicule the metaphysical distinction between Experience as transcendental and experience as a phenomenon. For instance Mr. Dewey, the leader of the school in the United States, has recently expressed his opinion that, when philosophers have, as the result of reflection, alighted upon a distinction between what is stable and good in quality, they withdraw it from the sphere of practical pursuit and choice, and elevate it into an "asylum for contemplation or a theme for dialectical elaboration, instead of an ideal to inspire and guide conduct." He holds, further, that "the contents and the form of ultimate absolute experience are derived from and based upon the features of actual experience, the very experience which is then relegated to unreality by the supreme reality derived from unreality." This explanation (or conjecture) is, or may be, true of such *mere speculation* as forms the basis of Western metaphysics from Democritus and Plato down to Kant and Hegel. But, as already frequently pointed out, the Indian Vedantin does not base his doctrine of Reality on mere speculative analysis and reasoning, but on the logical co-ordination and synthesis of the statements found in the eternal and divine revelation of the Veda as the one source of truth.

Mr. Dewey says rightly:—"Not safely can an 'ism' be made out of experience. For, any interpretation of experience must perforce simplify; simplifications tend in a particular direction; and the direction may be set by custom which one assumes to be natural simply because it is traditionally congenial. For at least two hundred years many interests, religious, industrial, political, have centred about the status of the individual. Hence the drift in all the systems save the classic traditional school has been to think in ways that make individuality something isolated and central. When the notion of experiences is introduced, who is not familiar with the query, uttered with a crushingly triumphant tone,—'Whose experience'? The implication that experience is not only always somebody's, but that the pecu-

liar nature of somebody infects experience so pervasively that experience is *merely* somebody's and hence of nobody and nothing else." We have quoted this long passage to show how narrow, inadequate, and therefore vulnerable is both the matter and method of Western thought,—how its problems and pronouncements in spite of its noisy and proud pretension to have as their support the precise content of the experience of individuals, are *avowedly* based on mere "interests"—and, when they are not so based, on what Mr. Dewey explains as "that which is close at hand", and describes as "experience in its gross and macroscopic straits,"—i. e., not only the empirical data which goes by the name of science, but anything else we can think of, whether magic, myth, mystery, reverie, imagination, ignorance, abnormality, insanity, disease, and what not, if only the phenomena find their entrance into a thinker's mental equipment and are utilised by him as the materials on which to expend his powers of analysis and reasoning so as to build up his system of doctrine.

The Indian mind can never find rest—or even food for meditation—on what Mr. Dewey recognises as experience only "denotatively found"; nor is its method of reasoned and fruitful synthesis to be wasted upon such unpromising materials as form the "natural" phenomena from whose investigation and analysis the Western thinker hopes to construct the "supernatural" world of metaphysical reality which is to bring peace and satisfaction to the philosophic mind of every inquirer after eternity. As already frequently explained (under previous headings) the Vedantin builds his doctrine of reality on the divine revelation of the Veda. He also resolves to practise the methods taught therein in order to perfect his higher nature so as to realise the perfect truth and joy which is to make him for ever free from the bondage of phenomenal experiences.

Like all other schools of Indian religion and thought, the Vedanta holds that *samsara*—the cause of births and deaths in the phenomenal universe—is a burden, and brings misery to the *Jiva*, but differs from them in ascribing its origin to *Ajnana*,—the phenomenal ignorance of the true nature of the One Self (or Absolute Reality). Now, what is the nature of *Ajnana*?

This *Ajnana* is also otherwise known as *Maya*. A good deal of obloquy and denunciation has been directed against the Advaitin as being a *Mayavadin*. But, in truth *Maya* is only a synonym for *Prakṛiti* (primordial matter). The *Svetasvatara Upanishad*

says :—"Know Maya to be the same as Prakriti." And Sankara also says in his bhashya on Sutra I. 4, 3,— "That causal potentiality of the world is of the nature of ignorance (*avidya*); it is denoted by the term *avyakṭa* (undeveloped); this *avyakṭa* is in some places denoted by the term *ākāśa*; in some places it is denoted by the term *akṣhara*; in some places it is spoken of as Maya."

The Vedanta holds that there are three kinds of existence: (1) *Paramārtha*, the one absolute reality, which is always the same, —never subject to any change of form from any limitations of time, place, or action from any other similar or dissimilar thing. (2) *Vyāvahāra*, the world of phenomena, external and internal, which we know through the medium of the intellect or the senses. (3) *Pratibhasa* apparent existence like what we see in the state of dream, or a pure mirage and fabrication of the mind like the silver superposed on a mother-of-pearl which, from mere mistake of observation, we do not perceive truly.

Ajnana or *Maya*, (*Nature* in its undeveloped and unmanifested state) belongs to the second of these three classes—and hence also all the *material* phenomena forming the universe. (a) It is not a mere non-entity (*Sunya*) like the horn of a hare, but *bhava-rupa*, positive in nature. Because it is a positive but changing, evolving form of existence, it is not a noumenal (or absolute) and permanent reality and is liable to be stultified, as we know it has been in the case of all liberated souls, past and present whether referred to or not, in the Veda and the allied sacred literature in India. (b) It is not *niramsa* (without parts)—for then, it would not be capable of evolution. Nor is it possessed of parts (*samsa*), for that would imply that it can be destroyed by an adequate application of physical force, and so cannot be the original (though only *proximate*) material cause of the manifested universe. (c) It cannot exist apart from Atman: nor can it remain in inseparable association with it—as its essential characteristics, viz., *anrita*, *jada*, and *duḥkṣha*, are the very reverse of those of the Atman, viz., *Satyam*, *Jnana*, and *Ananda*. Further, if such inseparable association existed between the two, it will have to follow that, when Maya is stultified its associate too,—viz., the Atman—will get stultified;—and that is impossible and absurd, as the Atman is, by the Veda, defined as the one *permanent* reality which is the indispensable condition rendering possible the manifestation of the universe of phenomena. —For all these reasons, Maya is called *anirvachaniya*—a phenomenon inexplicable in its origin and nature. The *Vaṣiṣṭha* Sara puts the nature of Maya in

a nutshell:—"This Maya, Oh Rama I is of this nature, viz., (1) its essence (*svabhava*) cannot be clearly perceived; (2) it gives joy by its self-stultification (*svanasa*); (3) it disappears when it is truly (and fully) comprehended in its essence and actuality."

The above doctrine concerning Maya (Nature or primordial matter) is strongly condemned and denounced by various Indian schools of thought. But the Advaitin maintains his position by a powerful battery of arguments. Among Indian thinkers, there are two views in regard to the origin of phenomena. Some hold that every phenomenon arises from a *previous non-existence* (*prag-abhava*). These thinkers form the school known as *Asat-Karya-Vada* (the doctrine of the origination of effects without a previously existing cause). Others hold that all effects (in the phenomenal world) exist previously, though in a different form known as the cause. *Ex nihilo nihil fit*. These hold the doctrine known as *Sat-Karya-Vada*. The Advaitins take their place among the *latter*. Hence, *avidya* (or Maya), being accepted as the cause of bondage, is *positive* in nature,—not a *non-entity* or mere negation.

The following *further* arguments are advanced in confirmation. *First*, it is supported by universal experience,—i. e., by what is known as *pratyaksha-pramana*. Every one says,—*Ahamajanah*—"I do not know the Brahman." The Nyaya school of thinkers, hold that this ignorance (of Brahman) is a mere ordinary (*samanya*) negation (*abhava*)—i. e., we negate the existence of Brahman just as we negate a pot when it is absent on the floor in front of us (even though it may exist elsewhere). This view is entirely erroneous. Every ordinary case of negation implies the existence of *pratiyogi*, i. e., the object (negated) somewhere,—i. e., the absence of the perception of) a pot on the floor implies the existence of the same elsewhere. But, in the case of Brahman,—the one noumenal reality—no one has ever *perceived* it as existing anywhere, and so its absence on the floor in front of us does not mean that it exists like a pot elsewhere (and can be perceived as so existing) on earth. Hence, its absence before us cannot be considered as similar to the absence of a pot,—as a case of what is called *samanya-abhava* (ordinary negation). *Secondly*, in every case of ordinary negation there is wanted an *asraya* (abode) for it,—as when we say there is no pot on the floor. But the one Atman is the one universal, all-pervading *Witness* of all forms of phenomena—both of their presence and of their absence anywhere and at any time. This Atman is to be accepted by all on the basis of the Veda, as the

one source of our knowledge. As the Atman is the universal witness of all phenomenal existence (positive or negative) it is also the universal *asraya* (abode) of such existence,—and there is no other, for it is “one only without a second” (*Chhandogya Upanishad*). If we assume that it has another as its witness or abode that will land us in the fallacy of *regressus ad infinitum* (*anavastha*). *Thirdly*, Can Maya (*ajnana*) be considered as a *prior negation* (*prag-abhava*) which ceases when *followed* by the entrance (and the consequent presence) of what did not exist before? In the first place, we cannot admit this so-called *prag-abhava* as a category at all— for it is indistinguishable from the floor on which, for instance, it is said to be experienced. Further, the so-called *prag* (prior) *abhava* (of a pot) can only be related to its co-relative (*pratiyogi*) subsequent to our knowledge of the latter,—not *before* such knowledge, as this is a contradiction in terms. Hence the very conception of *prag-abhava* cannot be admitted at all. *Fourthly*, Maya (*ajnana*) cannot be classed under the Naiyayika's category of *Atyanta abhava* (or *sunya*) of which the stock example is ‘the horn of a hare’. No conception at all can be formed of it—and it is only a trick of language. The Maya of Vedanta is, as already stated, a phenomenal entity, and therefore stultifiable when the noumenal Atman is realised. But the *atyanta-abhava* (of the Naiyayika) is regarded as *nitya* (permanent) and therefore indestructible. *Lastly*, let us consider the state of deep sleep when there is no dream,—known as *sushupti*. Here we have no experience of sense-objects. Upon waking, however, we feel that we have been in a state of complete ignorance (*ajnana*). This state is clearly a *memory*, and implies a previous *experience*; and therefore a positive fact. *Ajnana*, therefore, is a positive fact of experience,—not a non-entity. In the state of deep sleep, it is a positive experience to the eternal and universal witness,—The Atman.

We thus reach the following conclusion :—The primordial Maya and its manifestation in the objects of the material universe are neither non-existent (*sunya, asat*) like the horn of a hare,—nor are they *nitya* (permanent reality) like the Atman, persisting in all the three states, past, present and future. Still, they are positive in form (*bhava-rupa*) as having a phenomenal existence and are technically known as *sad-asad-vilakshana*, i.e., different from both *sat* and *asat*.

Various questions have been raised and answered with regard to Maya (*ajnana*). We shall refer to them briefly before we conclude this section.

52839

I. When does *Ajnana* take its origin? The answer is, that is *anadi*, beginningless,—*ajanya*, without a cause. For, if it had a cause, that again must have a cause, and so we shall be landed in the fallacy of *anapastha* (a *regressus ad infinitum*). Moreover, *ajnana* is like a disease. What we want is a cure. So, we have only to seek a physician who knows, and can apply, the proper remedy. Hence to enter upon an enquiry into its cause is to take up a bootless and foolish errand. To this it may, perhaps, be objected that an investigation into the cause of a disease has often to precede the administration of a proper remedy. The reply is that, in putting forward an analogy, we should not indulge in vague or meaningless generalities. In the present case, the analogy, must be confined to a disease which is definite in its nature and for which we know also that there is a definite and infallible remedy,—for *ajnana* is only to be compared to such a disease.—Or we may compare it more appropriately to darkness in a room which has to be removed before we can find the object we are in search of. What we here need is a light, and no one can be regarded as a sane person who, refusing the aid of a light, starts on the inquiry what is the cause of darkness in the room, when it became dark, &c.

II. What is *Ajnana's* *Vishaya* (object) and *Asraya* (abode)? According to the Veda, only the Atman is both these. For, it is the one existence, and there is no other. We shall add a further explanation. All ordinary people, when questioned, reply, "I do not know the one true Self (Brahman)". Further, as already stated, in dreamless sleep, there is an experience of *ajnana*,—and, though we do not seem to be conscious of it, we must have had an experience of it, as, after waking, every one says,—"I slept soundly, knowing nothing all the while." Hence, we have here clearly a memory of a positive experience whose object is *ajnana*; and it is clear also that such experience of *ajnana* is, and must be due to the eternal witness of the Atman which is of the nature of pure intelligence (*jnana*).

Some hold that as the experience of *Ajnana*—of the fact that we have no knowledge of the one Brahman—is present in the waking state, the Jiva (and not the pure Brahman) ought to be regarded as its abode (*asraya*),—even though the latter (the pure Brahman) is its *vishaya* (object). To this view the reply is that our waking experience itself, like every other experience, is the effect of primeval ignorance (*mula-ajnana* or *mula-prakriti*), with which alone we are here concerned,—and the latter can have no *asraya* (abode) other than the pure Brahman "One only without a

second." *Secondly*, the formation of the Jiva's personality (*ahankāra*) is itself due to superposition (*adhyasa*)—or the identification of the Atman with Maya—which we shall next have to deal with; and Ajnana cannot be kept waiting for an abode till the Jiva's personality has come into existence in its own due time in the cycle (*kalpa*) to which he belongs. *Thirdly*, as *ajnana* is the cause of phenomenal bondage for the Jiva, so *jnana* (the realisation of the one self) is the cause of liberation. Both *ajnana* and *jnana* get related, as they must, to the same object,—for our knowledge of one object cannot remove our ignorance of another.

To the above observations regarding *ajnana*, some objections are put forward. We shall, for example, refer to two. I. A pot covered by a cloth does not shine to our sense of sight. But the Atman does shine though screened by *ajnana*, though not in its fulness of perfection. II. If the Atman, the one knower and enlightener (of the world) is screened by *ajnana*, the existence of *ajnana* itself (and thereby also of the world) cannot be known.—The following *reply* may be put forward to cover both objections. (1) Nothing can be decided from the fact that a particular analogy can be adduced against a doctrine. Other analogies may suit and that is enough. Here, we can adduce a better analogy. The eclipsed sun and moon shine, though not in full, even when the shadow is falling on them. Even so, the Atman shines in some measure, even while *ajnana* screens it so as to produce the sense of personality (*ahankāra*) in the Jiva. (2) In the case of the pot above-mentioned, we want *two* external aids to make it shine, viz., the falling of light on it when the cloth is removed, and its contact with our sense of sight. No such aids are needed to make the Jiva shine for us. The *ajnana* which covers the Atman shines itself with the aid of that which it screens but cannot hide in full,—viz., the Atman which ever shines by the glory of its self-effulgence (*svayamprakāsa*), while it also illuminates all else that is in the world of phenomena.

REMINISCENCES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA*

By A. Srinivasa Pai, B.A., B.L.

In the year 1893 while I was a student reading in the Presidency College, Madras, I had the good fortune of coming into personal contact with Swami Vivekananda. It was shortly before he left for America to attend the Parliament of Religions at Chicago. He was then unknown to fame but his unique personality attracted a considerable number of people—a good proportion among them being students—to his informal talks. I do not recollect seeing at these meetings any of the leaders of Hindu Society in Madras then, but there were students, teachers, second grade officials and vakils. It was after the Swami returned from America in 1897 with a name and a world-wide fame that the leaders and high grade officials and people used to flock in hundreds to listen to his talks and lectures. He was residing then (1893) with Mr. Bhattacharya (a Bengali gentleman, then Deputy Accountant General at Madras) in a house situated at a short distance from the southern end of the Marina. I used to go to this house in the evenings with some fellow students to listen to the Swami. We used to squat in the orthodox fashion very near the Swami on carpets spread on the floor. Vivekananda would smoke while talking. His talk touched on a large variety of subjects. And it was delightful to listen to him.

In those days a knowledge of the ancient Hindu Philosophy and doctrines was far less spread among the English-educated Hindus in Madras than now; and there were also far fewer popular writings on the subject. Our great gods in those days were Mill and Herbert Spencer, Huxley, Leslie Stephen and Haeckel. To us theirs was the last word in Philosophy, Politics and Sociology. And so, Vivekananda's expositions—logical and trenchant as they were—came as wonderful surprises on us. We had however no proper grounding to appreciate his expositions at their true worth. And the prejudices of some of us students in favour of the above-named European writers were hard to break through.

Once Vivekananda explained to us how the modern doctrine of evolution had been anticipated by our sage Kapila. On another occasion speaking of a Personal God and Impersonal God, he tried to show how the position of an agnostic or even atheist was really

* These reminiscences are based on the recollections of myself and my younger brother with whom I "compared notes" before recording these recollections.

not one of negation, as they had to believe in continuity—a continuous Principle running through all eternity. The position of the orthodox Christians, he said, was illogical and untenable. An arbitrary and sudden creation of a soul and then its eternal damnation or salvation—it was like “a stick with only one end.”

There was plenty of talk on lighter subjects. His own college days and the pranks that he and his fellow students played on some of their professors; how once they struck work and “went away and smoked”. Two stories of “the marvellous” which he told us I distinctly remember. One of these was of a blind man whose memory and sense of hearing were exceptionally acute. When the Swami was quite a young boy this blind man had once heard him talk and sing. Years afterwards he came one night to a house where Vivekananda was staying. On hearing the Swami sing he at once recognised the voice and asked whether he was not the boy whom he had heard in such and such a year at such and such a place. This blind man while walking in the streets would clap his hands and listening to the sound would say ‘Here on my right is a vacant space’ or ‘There on my left is a tall building’ and so on. The other story was of a “magician,” a man (a Mussalman, if I recollect correctly) who had acquired certain “Siddhis” or supernatural (so-called) powers. A European wanted to test his powers, and one evening they drove together in an open carriage of the European to a street in Calcutta. While they were driving the ‘magician’ said to the European, “Now ask for anything you want and I shall give you.” The European thought for a moment and then said “Give me a bottle of Champagne”, knowing that no such thing was in the carriage or anywhere near at hand. The ‘magician’ stretched out his arm, clutched at something in the air and brought in a bottle of Champagne. Then saying “Now look,” he waved his hand towards the right row of shops in the street and all the lights in that row were put out; while the lights in the opposite row were burning as before. Before the people in the street and shops could quite recover from their surprise he waved his hand again and the lights in the right row were relit.

I am reminded of another story he told us while on the subject of the rude and at times insulting behaviour of Europeans in India to ‘Natives’. Naturally he spoke with much feeling on the subject as every self-respecting Indian would. Once, it seems, a solicitor in Calcutta was rude and insulting to an Indian Barrister. The leading Indian clients and lawyers held a meeting and re-

solved to boycott that particular solicitor. "And from the next day," said Vivekananda, with an expressive gesture tilting his thumb towards his lips, "the solicitor had to suck his thumb."

The bare-headed photographs in the book "Swami Vivekananda's speeches and writings," published by Messers G.A. Natesan & Co. give a good idea of the appearance of the Swami. But no photograph or description can give a correct idea of the power of his eyes. They were wonderful. Like the "Ancient Mariner" in Coleridge's famous poem he "held you by the eye". The voice too had an indefinable attraction. Though not ringing and silvery like Mrs. Beasant's in her prime, nor soft and pleasant like Mr. Norton's it attracted you and held you. He could sing beautifully. One evening as we were sitting listening to him a pretty little child—a daughter of Mr. Bhattacharya, I believe,—toddled in. He took the child on his lap and sang a Punjabi song. He observed that the song was attributed to Guru Nanak and told us of its origin. One evening at the time of "Ārati" Nanak went to a temple. The Brahmin priests would not allow him to enter. So, he turned aside and sang this song in which he compares the sky to a silver plate, the stars to little lights—'Niranjans' in that plate used for "Ārati", the perfumed evening breezes to incense, and so on, reminding us students of Moore's poem which we had read in one of the School Text Books of the time, beginning with the lines :

"The Turf shall be my fragrant shrine,
My Temple, Lord, that arch of Thine."

In person Vivekananda was not flabby like many of the Bengalis whom we see, but was sturdy and somewhat thick-set. The complexion was brown with a slight coppery hue.

In manner Vivekananda was natural, unaffected and unconventional. There was none of that solemn gravity, measured utterance and even temper that we usually associate with a sage. At times his manner was somewhat Johnsonian and brusque when he wanted to put down one who had asked a silly question or a question intended to show off one's knowledge. One hot morning (this was after he returned from America to Madras) at the end of a long sitting when many questions had been asked and answered, a somewhat conceited young man asked pompously, "What is the cause of misery in this world, Swami?" "Ignorance is the cause of misery" blurted out Vivekananda and rose and closed the interview. On another occasion one in the audience pointed out to

the Swami that the view expressed by the Swami on some point of philosophy differed from that of Sri Sankaracharya. "Well", said the Swami, "Sankara was a man, you are a man, and you can think for yourself." An orthodox Pandit appears to have had an interview with the Swami and attempted to show off his learning. Speaking of that interview the Swami said, "The fellow who cannot pronounce 'Jnana' properly has the cheek to criticise my pronunciation of Sanskrit."

On Vivekananda's return to Madras from America in 1897 the public reception given to him was magnificent and the crowds which came to greet him, some of the largest. His first public lecture in Madras cannot be called a success as a lecture. But that was due to the over-enthusiasm of the crowds. It was arranged for, I believe, in a big Circus-tent, but even that was found insufficient to hold the crowds, and the Swami had to come outside and mount a carriage to address the huge concourse in the "Geeta fashion" as he said. He strained his voice to the utmost, gesticulated, but it was all no good. The noise and disorder were great and the lecture had to be given up after a short time. The subsequent lecture in the Victoria Hall on "The sages of india" was a grand success. It was a very impressive lecture marked by a flowing eloquence. When he came to that portion of the lecture which deals with "Rasa Kreedha" or the Love of Gopis to Sri Krishna and explained the true significance of that sublime Love, the expression of his face and especially of his eyes was beatific and soul stirring.

Informal talks in the mornings and answering of questions were arranged for in a pandal put up on the Marina near the old "Capper-House Hotel," somewhere near the site of the present premises of Queen Mary's College. Now, the leaders of Hindu Society in Madras, big Officials and Vakils and people in hundreds came and we students found it hard to get near to the Swami. One morning a European Lady (a Protestant missionary, I believe) came and spoke somewhat disparagingly of the enforced celibacy of a Sanyasin's life and of the harmful results of the starving of a noble instinct (noble, when rightly regulated). After a short psychological and philosophical explanation of the necessity of celibacy in a Sanyasin (which perhaps was not quite appreciated or understood by the lady), he turned to her and said half-humourously, "In your country, Madam, a bachelor is feared. But here you see they are worshipping me, a bachelor",

Here I may mention that once (was it before he left for America?) the Swami in a communicative mood made a personal confession "I am 30 years old now and have never known a woman."

Once he said to a number of young students in the audience that it was their first duty to cultivate physical strength and health. "You may have the Geeta in your left hand but have a football in your right." He expressed on one occasion the view that it was the men who were physically weak that yielded to temptations easily, and that those with plenty of physical vigour and strength were far better able to resist temptations and exercise self-control than the former.

Once referring to himself he said, "There is an 'ustad' under these robes" ('Ustad' an expert gymnast or a teacher of gymnastics).

At this time, (1897 after his return from America) Vivekananda was residing in "Castle Kernan" the well known house on the Marina (when I first went to Madras it was known as the 'Ice-House'; then the late Mr. Biligiri Ayyangar bought it as his house; and he named it "Castle Kernan" after Mr. Justice Kernan. There was a "Kernan-maze" in its compound which some of us students used to take pleasure in entering and getting lost).

In "Castle Kernan" during these memorable days some of us students were invited and we ate with Vivekananda. The Swami's appetite was great and he ate heartily. Once pointing humorously to a dish of ice-cream before him he said, "I can renounce everything excepting this." At times baskets of fruits sent to him by friends from Bangalore used to arrive. As soon as they would arrive they would be opened and the contents distributed among those present and the Swami also ate.

Sometimes in the early mornings Vivekananda would bathe in the sea opposite to "Castle-Kernan" along with a number of students.

Informal talks were at times held in the rooms of the Triplicane Literary Society. The late Dewan Bahadur R. Raghunatha Rao and a number of other social reformers including my old Assistant Professor of History the late Mr. A. Subba Rao (a sturdy Social Reformer and Agnostic) used to attend. Some of the Social Reformers were snubbed by the Swami and their views and methods criticised. Once when Mr. A. Subba Rao spoke rather disparagingly of the thinking-power and views of our old Rishis, the Swami remarked that Mr. Subba Rao could have no idea of the power of intense meditation which the Rishis had acquired through

long self-discipline, and added "You will be burnt to ashes if you think for half a minute like them."

When one evening the Swami was discoursing on "Faith in God" in the Triplicane Literary Society Dewan Bahadur Raghunatha Rao broke in in a solemn manner, "I have always preached that no nation, no race, no individual who did not believe in God ever became great." At this some of the irreverent young students smiled in an amused manner.

He spoke of his guru Sri Ramakrishna and some of Sri Ramakrishna's apparently mad actions undertaken with a view to kill the 'self' in him, the significance of which many—especially in Europe and America—could not understand. With reference to ordinary American audiences he said, "If I had spoken of these acts to them, they would have thrown me and my guru into the nearest ditch."

When the effect of religious beliefs (Hindu and Christian) on the masses came up for discussion, Vivekananda said, "If like me you had visited the slums of Europe and America and seen how near to brutes the inhabitants of those slums are, and then compared them with our masses in India, your doubts as to the effect of Hindu religious beliefs on the masses would have vanished."

SEEDS OF WAR*

By Rev. Charles E. Jefferson, D. D., LL. D.

HOW TO END WAR

The great question for us to consider on Armistice Day is how to end war. It is not easily ended. It cannot be ended without a tremendous struggle. We cannot end it by wishing it ended, or hoping it ended, or praying that it may be ended. It cannot be ended by denouncing it, or hating it, or passing resolutions against it. It cannot be ended unless we quit planting the seeds of war. An inspired apostle once told us that we are living under the law of seed growth. From the dominion of that law there is no escape. 'Whatsoever a man sows that shall he also reap.' That is a law for nations as well as individuals. Whatsoever a nation sows that shall it also reap. If it sows the seeds of war, it will reap the harvest of blood. That is the kind of universe we are living in, and from the consequence of our sowing there is no escape. Let us think this morning about just a few of the seeds of war.

* Extracts from a lecture delivered on the eve of the Armistice Day in Broadway Tabernacle, New York City. U. S. A. Reproduced from the *Forward*.

SLANDERING OF OTHER NATIONS

At the head of the list let us place sarcastic and insulting speech about other nations. We do not often realize the tremendous possibility of evil in foolish and hateful words. Journalists of the baser sort in every country plant the seeds of war. A journalist who habitually lies about other nations, and slanders them, ought to go to prison as a traitor to his country and an enemy of the human race. There ought to be a law written on our statute books making the slandering of other nations an act of treason. Statesmen are often reckless in their use of words when they speak of other nations. . . . Many of us are not at all careful when we speak of other nations. Christians ought above all other people, to be exceedingly careful not to say unkind and unjust things about other countries. Unkind and unjust words embitter and enflame the feelings of the heart, and it is out of these ugly feelings that war at last comes.

RECKLESS LEGISLATION

We should also beware of reckless legislation passed in a haughty and supercilious spirit. Our Asiatic Exclusion Act passed a few years ago was a shame and a disgrace. The desired end may have been a good one, but the manner in which the law was passed was inexcusable. The same end could have been obtained in a gentler and more courteous manner. There was no excuse for giving needless pain to a sensitive and high strung people which wants nothing so much as to be our friend. Whenever we wound the heart of other peoples, we are planting the seeds of war.

GUNBOAT POLICY IN CHINA

We should cease to follow policies which are provocative of national resentment. We are often reckless as a nation in the ways in which we deal with other nations, especially with those which we regard beneath us. For instance we keep gunboats in some of the rivers and lakes of China. We have a few men-of-war at certain harbours along the Chinese coast. We have no business to have them there. We will not allow China to patrol any of our rivers or lakes with gunboats. We would tear the heavens down in a frenzy of wrath until the last such foreign vessel had been sunk out of sight. Why do we have them in China? Because China is defenceless. China cannot strike us with her fist. Because she is helpless, we impose upon her. We insult her by our gunboat patrols. It is sometimes said that we have gunboats there in order to protect our missionaries. I used to be hood-

winked along with some of you by that specious argument. It was one of the surprises I experienced when I got to China, to discover that our missionaries do not want the gunboats there. They do not ask for naval protection. They want the gunboats to come home. They are not a protection but a menace. The presence of a foreign gunboat is a constant irritation to the Chinese mind. That irritation is becoming an inflammation, and the inflammation is growing year by year. The student body in China is constantly increasing and the students are going to set on fire the whole Chinese people. China will not submit indefinitely to the impertinences and insults of the Christian nations of the West. If we do not bring our gunboats home now, it will not be long before we shall be compelled to bring them home. They are only a few in number, and when China makes up her mind that they shall depart, they will depart. In order to keep them there it would be necessary to send a thousand times more ships, and after we had sent a thousand more, we should be compelled to send another thousand—something that the American people will never consent to do.

THE ORIENT TURNING FROM THE WEST

We are approaching the end of an era. The Christian Church has reached a crisis in its career. It cannot go on as it has been going. It has got to become more Christian or cease to claim to be the leader of the world. The greatest living Hindu poet, Tagore has recently said that the Orient at one time revered the West, but that reverence had ceased to exist. The Orient now believes the West to be insincere. Our Christian countries are finding it increasingly difficult to present the ideas of Jesus to non-Christian congregations. Orientals have lost faith in Christianity. Christians claim to be followers of the Prince of Peace. They say that they worship the King of Love. They declare that the Law of Love is the supreme law of the world, that love is the mightiest power in human life, and nevertheless Christian nations go right on preparing for war. Christian nations are fighting nations. They have converted Christianity into a fighting religion. Who created the howitzers? Christians. Who created the submarines? Christians. Who created the tanks? Christians. Who invented the bomb-dropping airplanes? Christians. Who created poison gas? Christians. Who soaked a continent with blood? Christians. No wonder the East is turning away from Christendom, feeling that it is a hypocrite and an enemy. The time has come when the Church of Christ must cut loose from the whole war system. The war system is a

millstone hung around its neck, which, unless it is torn off, will sink the Church into the depths of the sea. The Church of Christ must put its foot down on the whole military policy and programme. We claim to follow Jesus Christ, the Leader who said, 'Put up your sword.' We do not put up our sword. We are proud of our sword. We spend more money on it than on anything else. We make it longer and sharper and deadlier all the time. The time has come when the Christian Church must say to the diplomats and statesmen, 'Put up your sword.' Men cannot serve Christ and Mars. The Church cannot worship Christ and Caesar and Napoleon. The Church cannot follow Christ and Chinghis Chan, and Tamerlane. The Church cannot worship Christ and follow in the footsteps of Tiglath-Pileser and Rameses II. We have done it long enough. The time has come when all that must be ended. We must unitedly work on the technique of peace. We must spend our time and our money in perfecting the machinery of peace. We must seek to make friends of all the nations on the earth. We must prepare ourselves. We must put up lines of defence. Some men speak as though there were only one kind of defence. They assume there is only one way in which security can be obtained. There is only one kind of preparedness. It is a preparedness of guns. It is a defence by guns. It is security obtained by guns. Every intelligent man believes in preparedness, in security, in defence, but there is another kind of defence. Friendship is defence. Friendship secures security. Friendship is a form of preparedness.

FEDERATION OF THE WORLD

In China every Province has two governors, a Military Governor and a Civil Governor. In Fukien, the Province in which Foochow is located, there is a Military Governor who is exceedingly unpopular. He has the reputation of being autocratic and cruel, and he has thousands of soldiers under his command. He defends himself by guns. The result is he is afraid to go out of his house. He goes out but seldom, and then under a heavy guard. When he wants to cross the bridge of ten thousand ages, he orders all traffic across the bridge to be stopped for hours before his arrival. When he comes he is carried in a sedan chair between two lines of armed men. He believes in a defence of guns. I do not know whether he is alive yet, but I should not be surprised to read almost any day of his death. I do not believe he is secure. I have no faith in his kind of defence. The Civil Governor is a Confucian scholar of gentle heart and beautiful spirit. All the

people love him. He can go out of the house any time he pleases. He can ride through the most crowded streets in his sedan chair without fear. He can even walk in the most dangerous sections of the city in perfect safety. He is protected by the loyalty of loving hearts. That is the true defence of a nation. No nation is in the slightest danger which lives its life in the midst of friends. That is the supreme duty of our country—to make friends of all the other countries of the world. We must co-operate with them. We must come into closer fellowship with them. There must be a federation of the world, and the United States must be a part of it.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

MESSAGE OF THE VEDAS

The Vedas are regarded as the most authoritative scriptures by all sections of the Hindus. They represent the fountain-head of the wisdom of the ancient Aryans. The antiquity of the Vedas is unquestioned. The researches of eminent scholars, like the late Bal Gangadhar Tilak, have proved beyond doubt that in the Rig-Veda we have one of the most ancient, if not the very earliest, records of the civilisation of the Indo-Aryans. And as such the lessons drawn from the Vedas must possess a peculiar value and interest to the followers of Hinduism.

The latest figure in the field of Vedic research is Dr. Abinash Chandra Das of the Calcutta University. Many of our readers may be already familiar with his valuable contribution to the understanding of the Rig-Vedic culture. Presiding over the Veda Sammelana of the Gurukul University Silver Jubilee Celebration held at Haridwar on the 16th of March last, Dr. Das delivered an inspiring address on the message of the Vedas. According to him the Vedic civilisation built up the Aryans into a strong and virile nation; and it was the falling off from the Vedic ideals and slavish imitation of the foreigners that brought about the degeneration and decay of the glorious Hindu race. "If we wish to recover our ancient glory," he remarks, "and resuscitate ourselves as a living and progressive nation, we should make an earnest and organised effort to study the Vedas, the most ancient literature of the Aryans, and assimilate the best point of Vedic culture along with whatever is noble and wholesome in the culture of the West."

According to Dr. Das Aryan culture is indigenous to the Punjab and older than any culture that we know of. Taking his stand on the internal evidences, he repudiates the theory of the Western scholars who have fixed the age of the Vedas between 2000 to 1500 B C. From the same source he concludes that there was a different distribution of land and water in North India during the time when the Vedas were revealed to the Rishis.

The second lesson is that the Aryans were a united people without distinction of so many castes which we find to-day. There was no restriction as to inter-dining and inter-marriage. Even the division into four castes which is mentioned in one 'mantra' of the Rig-Veda (X. 90, 12) Dr. Das interprets as being gradually evolved according to the peculiar tendencies and occupations of men. Even in this stage there is no prohibition as regards inter-dining and inter-marriage. The caste system, if such a name could be used at all, was elastic enough to admit others into its fold. It is pointed out that cooks were usually recruited from the fourth caste, and this custom was continued down to the Epic time and even later. Dr. Das believes that the Aryans were a homogeneous people, and had none of the narrow caste-prejudices which we find to-day working against the social unity.

The third great message is the equal status of women with men possessing the same rights and privileges. There were no infant-marriages, and the maidens chose their husbands. Ladies also could become Rishis like men. Ghosa, Lopamudra and Viswamitra composed Vedic hymns. The last performed the duties of a 'Hotri' (a sacrificial priest) also at a sacrifice. The influence of women in domestic, social and political matters were such as to bring forth vigorous and noble progeny. Dr. Das feels much for the present degraded condition of our women and pleads that they should be restored to their former privileges and enlightenment.

The next message of the Vedas is that the Aryans were a democratic people framing their own constitution, electing their own kings, withholding the taxes when the Government failed to discharge its duties and even deposing their kings whenever necessary. After a careful study of the Vedas and the ancient literature and history of India, Dr. Das points out that a spirit of democracy is ingrained in the very nature of the Indo-Aryans.

Another message is that our people have always been sending out missionaries who spread Aryan culture in many a foreign

land. Long before the Buddhistic Missions, the Rig-Vedic Paniks and Vaniks sailed to the then known world in merchant ships to trade and to spread Aryan culture. They visited the Deccan, Mesopotamia, Phoenicia, Egypt, China, Japan and probably far off America in subsequent times.

Another message is that we should look to the land as the source of our wealth and support. Our Vedic ancestors were pre-eminently an agricultural people possessing herds of cattle. And they manufactured every article of their consumption. And we too should take ourselves to agriculture in right earnest, adopting a course the present improved scientific methods, and manufacture all the necessities of our life including our clothing.

The last and the most important message is the grand ideal, placed before the people—viz. to know and realise Brahman, and through Brahman, the solidarity of the human race. Dr. Das observes, "We should learn to see God in everything and everything in God. Our love of God should be as wide as the Universe itself, comprising within its vast compass, not only humanity as a whole, without any distinction of caste, creed or race, but also life in every shape and form; and our mind and soul should be saturated with a world-wide good-will and compassion for all living creatures, such as the great Buddha felt and taught to mankind, and such as our 'Rishis' and 'Sannyasis' sacrificed and are still sacrificing everything to cultivate and realise."

WASTAGE OF INDIA'S MAN-POWER

Nation is individual writ large and on the vigour of its manhood, no doubt lies its strength and virility. In all its social and political activities it is the nation's man-power that counts most. Social values, be they ethical or religious, aesthetic or economic, are all created by men. Hence the conservation of the nation's man-power and its transformation into creative forces are of utmost importance to its welfare. In his thought-provoking article on "Wastage of India's man-power" contributed to the April number of the *Modern Review*, Mr. Rajani Kanta Das has revealed to us with facts and figures the piteous condition of India to-day.

As a nation in the matter of average longevity we are in the lowest rung of the ladder. In the census of the world we have the smallest number of men over sixty living a retired and peaceful life,

We have the largest death role in the world, and in no other country there is such a rate of infant mortality as ours. It is interesting to note how this sad state of affairs goes hand in hand with the literacy of the people. Only 12% of the children of the school going age get some sort of primary or elementary education. And 92% of India's population sunk in ignorance without any provision for training and education, badly fed, badly clothed, live and die in insanitary surroundings! Any one would stare aghast to hear that 124 millions of India's children, that is 39% of her population have no scope at all for developing their physical and mental faculties and that 65.5 millions of her total male population pass their days without sufficient work, in sickness and disease. Speaking of India's women, the writer observes that the labour or energy resources of 60 millions out of 86 millions "might be said to be lost." Indeed such wastage of human energy is unparalleled in the history of any country in the world. The writer further points out that the average activity for India's man-power is only eleven years as against three times eleven and three for the rest of the world. "The most important problem of India," concludes Mr. Das, "is that of the conservation and utilisation of her human resources. It is the development of the physical strength and mental faculty of her population upon which depend her national prosperity, political development and social progress." The article ought to be an eye-opener to all lovers of humanity in any part of the world.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF JOURNALISTS IN INDIA.

The responsibilities of journalists in India towards the continuance of concord and amity have been emphasised recently by the public utterances of many leaders of thought. Mahatma Gandhi laid his finger on the true cause of communal riots when he ascribed the martyrdom of Swami Shraddhananda to the mad frenzies of some of our irresponsible newspapers which missed no opportunity to create rupture and revel in hatred. While addressing the Indian Journalist Association, Mr. K. Natarajan of Bombay also struck the same note. He dwelt on the use and abuse of editorials and headlines the *suggestio falsi and suppressio veri* that very often taint the news as given, and appealed for a controlled and chastened management of news and views. To those who realise the appalling commercialisation of the press in the West and the usurpation of private judgment and public opinion by a capitalist junto, the future of Indian journalism is of serious consequence. The press, like everything else, is but an instrument of service, a means to-

wards a higher end—the upholding of our Dharma, the unfoldment of our Destiny. Any deviation from Indian ideals of peace and brotherhood will spell disaster. Everywhere we see around us the effects of blindness to the obligations of power, of littleness in great places. In the midst of this deplorable state of affairs the Indian Journalist Association can do much to elevate and purify the ideals of the Indian press.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

The Vedānta Philosophy—By Sridhar Majumdar, M. A. Published by Surendranath Bhattacharya, M. A., Professor of Sanskrit, B. N. College, Bankipore. Pp. 770—XXIV. Price Rs. 5.

We congratulate the author for bringing out this valuable English translation of the Brahma Sūtras of Bādarāyana. The volume under review contains the original sūtras, their word for word meaning, explanatory quotations from the Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita etc., with their English translations as also notes based on Nimbarka's commentary—the 'Vedānta-pārijāta-Saurava'—and this is doubly welcome as the commentator was one who tried to reconcile the view-points of Sankara, Ramanuja, Madhva and others. The author, however, has noted the views of Sankara in instances of material difference. He has added at the beginning of each section a lucid sketch which has made the work of the student easier. The style of the book is simple and clear. An appendix of twenty-four pages explaining the difficult Sanskrit terms, used in the book has greatly enhanced its value. The author has rendered a positive service to the students of Vedānta by bringing out this translation.

The Pythagorean Way of Life By Hallie Watters. Published by Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras. Pp. 70

This Publication is a thesis submitted by the Author to the Leland Stanford Junior University. It is the brief history of one of the most important movements of antiquity—the Pythagorean Movement. A short sketch of the great philosopher, scientist and religious reformer, his rule of life handed down by oral tradition with other moral precepts current in his school as transmitted to us in the "Golden Verses" of Lysis, and a running commentary of the latter form the main theme, while an Introduction and a select Bibliography completes the booklet.

Balak—Hindi Monthly, published by Rama Krishna Briksha Sharma Binipuri, Laheria Saria, Behar.

We have received the Magh special issue of the 'Balak' at the commencement of its second year's career. Its useful and informing articles like 'Guru Nanak,' 'What should we eat?' 'Northern India at the time of Gautama the Buddha,' 'Afghanistan,' with its fun and frolic makes it a charming reading specially for the young.

NEWS AND REPORTS

REPORT OF THE VEDANTA SOCIETY, PORTLAND, OREGON

We are glad to receive the first Annual Report of the Vedanta Society. It is a very hopeful record of the spread and influence of the sublime teachings of the Vedanta in America. The Society was opened as a result of the interest created by Swami Prabhavananda's visit to Portland in October 1925. "Starting with a good number of members," says the report, "now after the lapse of only one year's time the hall is beginning to seem small and there is much talk among the members of more commodious quarters—of a temple to be the Society's very own."

Swami Prabhavananda held two evening classes each week during the year, besides giving private lessons to members and non-members who came to him at other hours. He also gave a week of special lectures which brought several new members to the Society. During the winter he delivered a course of eight lectures on the Gospel of St. John in the Christian Bible. Another series of lectures is being conducted at present by the Swami on the Apocalypse of St. John, the Divine. These are proving to be of great interest and helpfulness to the students, "because they show clearly and logically that the same eternal, cosmic truths so wonderfully set forth in the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Gita are also behind the veils of the Apocalypse—one of the most mystically obscure books in the world to-day.

Swami Prabhavananda visited Tacoma and Seattle in the State of Washington thrice during the year and gave a number of lectures at both these places. In consequence there has been expressed a great desire for the opening of new centres with Swamis in charge. "There is a crying need in the West," says the report, "for the pure teachings of Vedanta. Many souls are hungering and thirsting for the truth. Most earnestly are we praying to the Divine Mother to send to this country more Swamis to spread further afield the message of the Master."

Special services to commemorate the birthday of Swami Vivekananda were held at the Society on the 30th January last. In the course of an impressive discourse Swami Prabhavananda spoke feelingly on the universal ideal of religion as embodied in the life of the Swami and also portrayed vividly his great work or the welfare of humanity.

The birthday of Sri Ramakrishna was also celebrated at the Centre with great devotion and enthusiasm on the 5th March. Swami Prabhavananda opened the Morning Service with chant and prayer. After the singing of the "Hymn to the Divine Mother," the students spoke one after another on the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna in well-chosen words. In the afternoon the students met to partake of "The Master's Birthday Dinner" given by one of the devotees. In the evening the Swami referred to the little every day things of Sri Ramakrishna's life, his simple tastes and love for fun, his great tenderness and love for mankind, his life of wonderful purity and Divine realisation. He brought the celebration to a close with an invocation that found its response in the hearts of all.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA SEVASRAM, TAMLUK, MIDNAPUR

Swami Jnaneswarananda and Swami Bhaswananda of the Ramakrishna Math, Belur, went to Tamluk and delivered a series of lectures to the public, students and ladies of the town. Several meetings were also organised at Natsal, Kalyanchak, Nimtouri, and Raghunathbari. The Chandipur Sri Ramakrishna Math also invited the Swamis and organised a public meeting there. Swami Jnaneswarananda conducted Bhajana at all these places visited. The lectures and Bhajans were well attended and much appreciated.

WESTERN INDIA VIVEKANANDA SOCIETY, BOMBAY

At the extraordinary general meeting of the members of the Western India Vivekananda Society held on Saturday the 9th April at the Bombay Students' Brotherhood Hall, under the chairmanship of Mr. M. R. Jayakar, President of the Society, it was unanimously resolved to amalgamate the Society with the Sri Ramakrishna Ashram, Khar. The following executive committee for conducting the public activities of the Ashram was also elected at the meeting; Mr. M. R. Jayakar, President; Mr. K. Natarajan and Swami Vishvananda, vice-Presidents; Mr. G. P. Murdeshwar and Swami Sambuddhananda, Secretaries; Messrs. R. K. Prabhu and R. Krishna Iyer, Assistant Secretaries; Mr. F. J. Cinwalla, Treasurer; Drs. A. L. Nair and Rajaballi Patel, Messrs. J. K. Mehta, K. N. Mahale, B. N. Motiwala, M. J. Mehta, Thakurdas Munim, Jestha Ram Sunderdas, S. C. Banerjee and K. S. Krishna Iyer, members.

THE LATE MR. S. VEERARAGHAVACHARIAR

It is with great sorrow that we have to record the death in his sixty-fourth year of Mr. S. Veeraraghavachariar—one of the most devoted friends of the Ramakrishna Mission at his residence in Triplicane on Wednesday, the 20th April, 1927. He was healthy and cheerful till 8 O'clock the previous evening when he was struck down with paralysis, became unconscious, and passed away peacefully in the early hours of the next morning. Mr. Veeraraghavachariar was one of the blessed few that came under the inspiring influence of Swami Vivekananda before his historic visit to America in 1893; and he continued till the last day of his life to be a staunch and unselfish devotee of the Master and his Mission. In 1921 he made over by an absolute gift his spacious house in South Mada Street, Triplicane, to the Mission to be utilised for charitable purposes. Strong and self-reliant, genial and generous, he lived his life dedicated to the cause of the civic and and religious welfare of his fellowmen in the city. In him the Mission has lost a true friend who zealously stood by it and rendered invaluable help to it ever since its inception. Mr. Veeraraghavachariar has passed away. But he will ever be remembered by all who came into close contact with him as one who possessed a most loving heart, sturdy independence and spotless integrity of character.

SWAMI MADHAVANANDA'S DEPARTURE FOR AMERICA

At the earnest request of the members of the Vedanta Society of San Francisco, California, the authorities of the Ramakrishna Mission have deputed Swami Madhavananda to take charge of the centre in place of the late Swami Prakashananda who suddenly passed away in February last. The Swami left Calcutta on the 28th April by S. S. Talamba of the B. I. S. N. Company, which is bound for Japan. Unexpectedly the steamer halted for a few hours at the Madras harbour, and the Swami took the opportunity of paying a surprise visit to the Sri Ramakrishna Math, and the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home to the great delight of the brothers of his Order.

Swami Madhavananda fulfilled very ably the responsibilities of the President of the Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, for nearly a decade till last month when he handed over his charge to Swami Vireswarananda—the former head of the Advaita Ashrama Branch in Calcutta. To the readers of the Ramakrishna Mission literature Swami Madhavananda is well known as the translator of the Vivekachudamani and Sri Krishna and Uddhava, as the editor of the Hindi Monthly, The Samanvay, and editor and publisher of a large number of the works of the "Himalayan series." He is one of the most qualified and tried workers of the Mission to be sent to the West. And we most sanguinely hope that with his great spirit of renunciation and devotion, experience and erudition he will be able to make a deep impression on the minds of the American devotees, and prove to be of immense service to all who will look up to him for spiritual light and guidance.

THE VEDANTA KESARI

"Let the lion of Vedanta roar."

"Let me tell you, strength, strength is what we want
And the first step in getting strength is to uphold
The Upanishads and believe that 'I am the Atman,'"

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

VOLUME XIV]

JUNE 1927

[NUMBER 2

PRAYER.

ॐ

सर्वस्मिन् सर्वभूतस्त्वं सर्वः सर्वस्वरूपधृक् ।
सर्वं त्वत्स्तुतश्च त्वमेवं सर्वात्मने नमः ॥
सर्वात्मकोऽसि सर्वेशः सर्वभूतस्थितो यतः ।
कथमामि ततः किं ते सर्वं वेत्ति ह्यिदंस्थितम् ॥
सर्वात्मन् सर्वभूतेशसर्वसत्त्वसद्बुद्धि ।
सर्वभूतो भवान् वेत्ति सर्वसत्त्वमनोरथम् ॥

Lord! Thou abidest in all, Thou art all, Thou assumest all forms, all are from Thee. Hence Thou art the Soul of all. Salutations unto Thee.

Thou art the Soul of all, the Lord of all, the One Dweller in all. What shall I speak unto Thee who art seated in my heart; and knowest my innermost thoughts and feelings?

O Thou, the Soul of all beings, the Sovereign Lord of all creation, the Source of all that exists, Thou knowest all creatures as well as their desires.

VISHNU PURANA—1-12.

— — —

SPIRITUAL TALKS OF SWAMI BRAHMANANDA

(At the Naya Bazar Bunglow, Bhadrak)

GOD is the *Kalpataru* (the mythical tree that grants whatever a man desires sitting under it). From Him one gets what one asks for. Having obtained the rare privilege of human birth, man does not care to direct his mind towards the lotus feet of the Lord. Instead, he drowns himself in the deep ocean of *Samsara*, and exclaims, "How happy am I!" God also allows him to remain in that state undisturbed until tossed about on the waves of sorrow and misery, he repents for the past and cries, "Alas! what have I done!" Then He makes him feel his mistake. Man is, as it were, sitting under the shadow of the *Kalpataru*. If he wants to be a God, so can he be; and if he wishes to be like a brute, that also he may become.

The Lord has given man both *Vidya* and *Avidya*. *Vidya* means discrimination and renunciation. With its help man may attain the grace of the Lord; while *Avidya* which implies lust, anger, greed, infatuation, egoism and envy, degrades man to the level of the brute. The culture of *Vidya* destroys *Avidya* and makes man fit for the Supreme Bliss. But the growth of *Avidya* strengthens the idea of "I" and "mine," and binds him more and more to the world; he is taken further and further away from God, and has to suffer many sorrows and difficulties. Man has been endowed not only with *Vidya* and *Avidya* but also the power to discriminate between the two. And on the nature of his choice depends the success or failure of his life.

It is a great mistake to hold God responsible for your sufferings. You chose a path according to your sweet will and pleasure, and now enjoy its consequences.

How can you blame God for this? For a moment's pleasure you forgot everything else: you did not pause to consider what was right or wrong. If you put your hand into the fire it will naturally get burnt. Is it the fault of the fire? No. You alone are responsible for it. Sri Ramakrishna used to say, "A lamp is burning. Some may read Bhagavatam in its light while others may forge a document or do some other mischief. The lamp is not to blame for it." The Lord has placed before man the two paths—good and evil. Now choose the one you please.

As you think, so you become. By the help of discrimination and renunciation, realise God and become heir to the Infinite Bliss. But if you run after worldly things, you may no doubt enjoy sensuous pleasures for some time; but be sure your future will be dark and gloomy and you will have to pass through endless sufferings. The world is so constituted that, if you want pleasure, you must undergo pain as well. Whether you like it or not you cannot have one without the other.

Sri Ramakrishna used to say, "When the Malaya* breeze blows, all the timber trees are converted into sandal trees, while the bamboo, the plantain and other trees remain what they are. Similarly there are two classes of men in this world. Persons belonging to one of these are easily influenced by spiritual teachings which awaken in them *Viveka* and *Vairagya*. They regard the world as worthless and yearn for the grace of the Lord. They are determined to realise Him and solve the mystery of existence even at the risk of their life. With such a firm resolution they begin their *Sadhana*

* Name of a mountain range in the South of India abounding in sandal trees: Poets usually represent the breeze from the Malaya mountains as wafting the odour of sandal trees and other plants growing thereon.—V. S. APTE.

and succeed in the end; while the people of the other class can never be awakened either by the sorrows and miseries of life or by any lofty spiritual ideas. They think they are going to live eternally and fondly imagine that without them the world cannot go on. "What I have got in hand, I must enjoy to the full; otherwise I shall be a fool"—thinking thus they drag themselves into the depths of ignorance and suffering

What is it that you want—the sweet perfume of sandal or the stinking smell of filth? Do you want peace or unrest? Decide exactly what you want and follow the path for its attainment. Time is flowing like a swift stream. It will be of no avail to cry over the past, when it is too late. Make the best use of the present, without wasting a single moment. Train your mind in such a way that you may constantly think of God and nothing else. Your days are numbered; they are fast running out. So do not spend your time in vain.

Pray to the Lord with all your heart and soul—"Lord! give me wisdom and make me Thine own." Give up all ideas of "I" and "mine". You have suffered enough on that account. Replace "I" and "mine" by "Thou" and "Thine". Is there anything that you can call "your own" the moment you die? Nothing you cherish as yours will accompany you. Those whom you hold very dear will pass away when their time comes without caring for you at all. Leaving everything behind, one will have to go to an unknown place. The more you think of "I" and "mine", the more you fetter yourself. What is there in this *Samsara* for which people spend their whole life-time? Can this worldly life help you to cross the ocean of birth and death? Will it save you from the troubles that may attend you in after-life? What greater misfortune can befall you than leaving unfulfilled the purpose for which you have

taken this birth ! Make a strenuous effort and pray to Him with earnest devotion that you may reach the goal.

Hav'n't you heard what Sri Ramakrishna used to do at Dakshineswar ? How bitterly he used to cry for a sight of the Divine Mother, saying, 'Mother, one more day is gone and Thou hast not yet blessed me with Thy Vision ?' Call on Him with an intense yearning. What is this world but an abode of misery ? You have spent most of your days here in sorrow and trouble ; and do you wish to do the same hereafter as well ?

You have come under the shelter of Sri Ramakrishna ; know that you have also been blessed by him. Make a good use of the grace you have received. It will be really very unfortunate if you fail to do so and to solve the riddle of life and death, and obtain Eternal Bliss. You are the men of this age,* and have caught its spirit. Don't miss to take full advantage of it. No one in any age has shown the path in such a simple and easy manner as the Master has done now. If you miss this opportunity you will have to suffer long.

Spread the sails of faith and devotion, and with the aid of the spiritual breeze that is blowing push on to your goal. Do it, and your boat shall be swiftly carried to its destination. He is waiting for you. Arise ! Awake ! Infinite capacity is within you. Have firm faith in yourself and say, "I have heard His name, I have taken shelter under His feet ; fear and weakness can have no place in me ; by His grace I will attain to Him—in this very life." Don't look back. Go ahead. Be blessed with His vision ; and thus fulfil the mission of your life and partake of the Infinite Bliss.

* The reference is to the advent of Sri Ramakrishna.

EDITORIAL NOTES

Speciality of India's History

The history of India differs in certain respects from that of all other countries of the world. It is not a sad record of bloody conquest and reckless exploitation of the weaker races by the strong. It is, on the other hand, a wonderful chronicle of the evolution and progress of Hindu civilisation not only throughout the length and breadth of India but also in foreign countries that collectively came to be very rightly called "Greater India." Even when the ancient Hindu monarch desired, in the words of Aitareya Brahmana, "to attain to superiority, pre-eminence and overlordship among all kings, to acquire an all-embracing authority by attaining all forms and degrees of sovereignty, to achieve the conquest of both space and time and be the sole monarch of the earth up to the seas," he had before him not only the ideal of a political, but also a cultural conquest—the conquest of Dharma—an ideal later on proclaimed all over the land by King Asoka "the beloved of the Gods." Centuries before the advent of Bhagawan Buddha, this conquest by religion and spirituality was begun in right earnest in unknown lands and among aboriginal peoples. This peaceful penetration of Aryan ideas and ideals was proceeding slowly and steadily, bringing into existence a new synthetic civilisation, predominantly Aryan in tone, but formed of the union of both the Aryan and non-Aryan cultures. The great task before Lord Buddha and his followers was to hasten this process of Aryanisation so wisely inaugurated by the early fathers of the Hindu race.

Influence of Buddhism

The story of the rise and spread of Buddhism forms a most glorious chapter to the interesting history of the

cultural unity of Bharatavarsha. The advent of Buddha marked a new epoch in the religious history of the world. "India scattering his message over the Eastern world," says Sister Nivedita, "became the maker of nations, of churches, of literature, arts and scientific systems, in countries far beyond her own borders. But within India proper, the life of the great teacher was the first nationaliser. By democratising the Aryan culture of the Upanishads, Buddha determined the common Indian civilisation and gave birth to the Indian nation of future ages." True to the command of the Master, the inspired missionaries of Buddhism carried as early as the third century B.C. his great message of "mercy and charity, truth and purity, kindness and goodness" to the different parts of India and Ceylon, and even to the Hellenic Kingdoms in Asia, Africa and Europe. The noble teachings of Buddhism, rational and humane at the same time, exerted a great influence on peoples within and outside the bounds of India. Unlike the Semetic faiths, Buddhism never attempted to destroy other religions, but instead, tended to fulfil them by all means in its power. And everywhere in place of dead forms and ceremonies, meaningless austerities and penances, it held before mankind a course of practical ethics of which the Master himself was the highest embodiment. It tried to break down the invidious distinctions between class and class, race and race, and gave to one and all the opportunity to grow in spirituality and culture. And so widespread became the influence of Buddhism that "contemplative fraternities" came to be established even in distant countries like Egypt and Palestine. At the time of the birth of Christ there existed on the western shore of the Dead Sea, the Essenes - a hermit clan to which John the Baptist and Jesus the Christ are said to have belonged,—a brotherhood "marvellous beyond all others in the world, without any women, without the joys of domestic life, without money." It was a society which

was resorted to in large numbers by men driven through weariness of existence and surges of ill-fortune.—a community in which none was born but which nevertheless lived on perennially. Buddhism established itself wherever it went, but its power was felt more in the Eastern than in the Western part of Asia.

Foundation of Greater India

The expansion of Hindu culture in foreign lands began long before the spread of Buddhism. Enterprising Hindu traders crossed the seas and mountains, and carried to distant countries not only the commercial products but also the religion and culture of India. Many of these commercial groups founded small colonies particularly in Indo-China and in the islands of the Indian archipelago. By virtue of their superior civilisation they exercised great influence and became the ruling powers at many places. But none of these colonising enterprises was founded on brute force and supported by the ruthless subjection and even extermination of the aborigines, as has been and is still being done by the modern European colonists in different parts of the world. The policy followed by the Hindu adventurers was the same as was adopted in India itself. It was racial and cultural re-conciliation and assimilation which allowed each community to maintain its distinctive individuality and proceed along its own law of growth. Following in the wake of Hinduism came its "rebel child" Buddhism. Like the Mother faith, it too became the carrier of India's religion and philosophy, art and architecture, learning and literature. This cultural expansion undertaken by India was, to quote the apt words of Sri Arabinda Ghose, "an invasion of peace and not of war, for to spread a spiritual civilisation by force and physical conquest.....would have been uncongenial to the ancient cast of her mind and temperament.....The ships that set out from the eastern and western coasts

were not fleets of invaders missioned to annex those out-lying countries to an Indian empire, but of exiles and adventurers carrying with them to yet uncultured peoples Indian religion, architecture, art, poetry, thought, life, manners." If Hinduism was flowing to foreign lands like a placid stream, Buddhism came as a tidal wave that swept the then known world, especially the eastern part of Asia. And within the sixth century of the Christian era the religion of the Enlightened One came to be established in Ceylon, Java and Bali, in China, Korea and Japan, in Burma, Siam, Tibet, and many other countries. The spirit of Buddhism was the ancient harmonising spirit of India. Its ideals were the universal ideals of the Eternal Religion of India. "Within the era of cultural exchange," observes Dr. James H. Cousins in his *Cultural Unity of Asia*, "India takes the place of originator, not through seniority, nor by force but by the silent and deep pressure of the basic truth which it has been given her to utter, the truth of the unity of all things in the Divine Mind."

Relation between Hinduism and Buddhism

There exists a great misunderstanding about the true relation between the ancient faith and teachings of Gautama the Buddha. Over-zealous Buddhist missionaries are sometimes anxious to prove that the Master founded a new religion with an entirely new moral code. There are also some Hindu scholars who blindly believe that Lord Buddha contributed nothing to the ancient religion and philosophy of India. If he did anything at all, it was to preach a false and atheistic doctrine in order to delude and ruin the enemies of Vishnu ! If we want to form a correct estimate of the two faiths, we should not identify Hinduism with either Vedic rituals or with the religion of the commonalty which consists in following dead forms and ceremonies. Similarly Buddhism should not be confused with the religion of intricate atheistic

philosophies, gigantic temples, elaborate rites and corrupt practices of Tantra. We must go to the very fountain head of Hinduism and Buddhism,—to the Upanishads and the Tripitakas. And when we do that we find that there is a clear continuity between the most ancient Hindu scriptures and the original teachings of Lord Buddha. In fact Buddhism was an open revolt against the ritualism of the Vedic Karma Kanda which advocated the sacrifice of animals and claimed to take the sacrificer to the threshold of immortality. There was nothing altogether new about this “protest”; even in the earliest Upanishads we find bold and sincere souls questioning the utility of the vedic rituals and ceremonies and advocating instead the path of renunciation and knowledge. “The deluded souls,” says the Upanishadic seer, “who think that sacrifices and charitable works are of supreme value do not know the blessed goal. Neither by works, nor by progeny, nor by wealth but by renunciation alone can immortality be attained” In the words of Prof. Hopkins, “One cannot read the Upanishads without feeling that he is already facing an intellectual revolt..... The close and stifling air of ritualism has been charged with an electric current of thought that soon produced a storm. That storm reached a head in Buddhism, but its premonitory signs appear in the Upanishads, and its first out-break preceded the advent of Gautama.”

The Aryan Path

Lord Buddha discovered in his own life the highest ideals of the ancient faith. The path that he pointed out was, as he himself said, the Aryan Eight-fold Path. He called it also the Middle Path which avoided the two extremes of self-indulgence and self-mortification, and advocated “right view, right aspirations, right speech, right conduct, right mode of livelihood, right effort, right mindedness and right rapture.” Sri Krishna too speaks of the same path and the same ethical and spiritual

culture when he says in the Gita—"Success in Yoga is not for him who eats too much or too little nor for him who sleeps too much or too little. To him who is temperate in eating and recreation in his effort for work and in sleep and wakefulness, Yoga becomes the destroyer of misery ... Humility, non-injuriousness, forbearance, uprightness, service of the teacher, purity, steadiness, self control, constant application to spiritual knowledge—this is the path to Truth." Lord Buddha thus preached the old ideals in their pristine purity with a new power contributed by a personality all his own. Again, the Brahmin—the Knower of Brahman—the embodiment of the highest spiritual and ethical virtues—has ever been the ideal of the Vedic religion. "He alone is a Brahmin," says Yajnavalkya, "who departs from this world after having realised the Imperishable." In the words of the Gita, "Control of mind and senses, austerity, purity, forbearance and also uprightness, knowledge, realisation, belief in a hereafter—these are the duties of a Brahmin." Lord Buddha speaks in the same strain in Dhammapada—"He who is thoughtful, blameless, settled, dutiful, without passions, and who has attained the highest end, him I call a Brahmana." Besides, he believed in common with the Hindu teachers in the Law of Karma and Re-incarnation. The order of monks that he established was no innovation in India where innumerable spiritual aspirants, having known the Self and "rising above the desire for sons, wealth and new worlds," wandered about as mendicants even in the most ancient days.

Soul God and Nirvana

The most important conception in the Hindu religion is that of the Atman, and Lord Buddha is said to have denied it altogether. A study of the original Buddhism proves that this is not the fact. It is not the Master but

his followers who are responsible for this negation. What Lord Buddha seems to have denied was the eternal existence of the "ego-entity" to which mortals cling with so inordinate a passion. "Only through ignorance and delusion," says he, "do men indulge in the dream that their souls are separate and self-existent entities. Self is death and Truth is life. The cleaving to self is a perpetual death, while moving to the Truth is partaking of Nirvana which is life everlasting." As to the existence of God, Lord Buddha neither denied nor affirmed it. Like the Sankhyas, he might not have found a place for God in his cosmological system. But his description of the highest experience clearly shows that his ultimate reality was, like that of the Advaitins, a positive state of existence in which all individualities and personalities were transcended. This he calls Nirvana—an experience that cannot be described either as "to cease" or 'to live.' It is, in the words of the Master, "neither coming nor departing, nor standing still nor death nor birth. It is the end of sorrow. There is an unbecome, unborn, unmade, unformed. Since there is an unbecome, unborn, unmade, unformed there is an escape for that which is become, born, made and formed." In much the same language does the Upanishadic sage try to describe the Atman or Brahman—"Having realised That which is soundless, touchless, formless, imperishable and also without taste and smell, eternal, without beginning or end and immutable,—one is released from the jaws of death." The state of one who has attained Mukti or Nirvana even while being in the body has been described in both positive and negative terms. "Like a vessel immersed in the ocean, he is full within and full without. Like an empty vessel placed in the ocean of ether, he is void within and void without." Whether the Vedantic teachers speak of the highest experience as Purna (full) or the Buddhist as Sunya (void)—it is all the same.

Buddha's great Achievement

"The prevalent notion," observes Dr. Rhys Davids, "that Gautama was an enemy of Hinduism, and that his chief claim on the gratitude of his countrymen lies in his having destroyed a system of iniquity, oppression and fraud is nothing but a great misconception. This is not the case. Gautama was born and brought up and lived and died a Hindu ... There was not much in the metaphysics and psychology of Gautama which cannot be found in one or other of the orthodox systems, and a great deal of his morality could be matched from earlier or later Hindu books. Such originality as Gautama possessed lay in the way in which he adapted, enlarged, ennobled, and systematized that which had already been well said by others; in the way in which he carried out to their logical conclusion principles of equity and justice already acknowledged by some of the most prominent Hindu thinkers." The greatest achievement of the Master lay in his practical application of the eternal truths embodied in the Upanishads. To the grand philosophy of the Vedanta he added what may be called Buddhistic humanism. To the life of renunciation he joined the ideals of service which already existed in a limited form in the ancient scriptures. This path of service as emphasised by Lord Buddha was a sure means for preventing the life of meditation from lapsing into dry intellectualism or morbid inactivity so very dangerous to spiritual life. Besides, by democratising the highest Aryan culture, he brought it within the easy reach of all, irrespective of caste or creed, race or nationality. "It was the glory of Shakya Muni," says Swami Vivekananda, "that he had the large-heartedness to bring out the truths from the hidden Vedas and throw them broadcast all over the world. He was the first in the world who brought missionarising into practice,—nay. he was the first to conceive the idea of proselytising. Hinduism cannot live without Buddhism nor Buddhism without

Hinduism. The separation between the Buddhists and the Brahmanas is the cause of the downfall of India. That is why India is populated by three hundred millions of beggars, and that is why India has been the slave of conquerors for the last thousand years. Let us then join the wonderful intellect of the Brahmana with the heart, the noble soul, the wonderful humanising power of the great Master." This happy union of Hinduism and Buddhism—of head and heart, renunciation and service, meditation and activity—is sure to bring about the awakening and regeneration not only of the Hindus but also of the Buddhists, and unite India with the Buddhist countries of Asia by the common bond of culture. Such an alliance, if properly established has the immense possibility of founding a world-federation on the spiritual ideals of Asia, which India represents so faithfully more than any other country in the world.

NEED OF RELIGIOUS PRACTICE

By Swami Atulananda.

"The path of wisdom," says Sri Ramakrishna, "is very difficult. Much easier is the path of love and worship and devotion towards God." Well may we consider this before we look down upon those who practise with all sincerity what are called lower forms of worship. Perhaps there are many things we can learn from those who practise the simplest methods of worship.

Once a great Indian scholar and philosopher passed by a temple. There he saw a man poorly clad, worshipping an image. Tears of joy trickled from the eyes of the devotee. The scholar seeing the man in the act of worshipping an idol became indignant. "You fool!" he called out, "Don't you know that the idol is made of stone? Why do you worship a piece of stone? Do as I do, and repeat, 'Sivoham! Sivoham!' (I am God) Don't you know that you are the Atman? Throw away your idol." The poor devotee looking up said very humbly, "Yes, sir, I know that I am the Atman. The Lord Who dwells everywhere has in His great mercy revealed this to me. Through this idol He has spoken to me and has told me, that He, my beloved Lord, dwells in me

as my spirit and that he dwells in all beings, in plants and trees and animals and even in wood and stone, for He is omnipresent. He has kindly revealed Himself to me through this piece of stone. Such is His power. And whenever I worship Him before this idol, the stone seems to disappear, and I see my Lord there. He looks at me with smiling face, and talks with me. And forthwith I am transfixed into a state of ecstasy and tears of joy come to my eyes, meeting my Lord here "

Then the philosopher was wonder-struck. He recognized his own poor spiritual condition as compared to that of the simple devotee. He fell at the feet of the devotee, and begged to be instructed by him. And from that day he became his disciple, and through the worship of that same idol reached spiritual illumination.

It is said in the Gita that no effort in the religious life is in vain. Even a little done in the right spirit brings great results. Let us not think that because we have no time or strength to practise much, it is therefore useless to try. Let us do what little we can and the reward will follow.

In the Ramayana is a story which illustrates that if we do according to our strength and means, no matter how little it may be, the Lord is pleased with the attempt. Rama, a prince, and incarnation of God, was building a bridge across the Straits of Ceylon for his army to pass over to rescue his queen Sita. The neighbouring tribes, and even the animals of the forest, assisted in this arduous task. The monkeys were especially useful, for they could carry rocks and timbers, which they threw into the sea. And the bears brought stones to fill up the gaps. Now there was a little squirrel. Seeing every one so busy, the squirrel also wanted to help the godly prince. But what could such a little creature do to help in this gigantic undertaking? It seemed a hopeless case. However, the little squirrel was not discouraged. He rolled his body in the sand, ran quickly to the sea, and scratching the sand off his body, threw it into the ocean. Then he ran back to repeat the process. Thus he ran back and forth all day. At last Rama caught sight of the busy squirrel. He watched him for some time. Then his heart melted with love for the devoted little creature. He picked him up, held him to his breast, and stroking him gently with his hand blessed him. The little squirrel did what he was able to do, and the Lord was pleased and blessed him.

In the lives of the saints we see how they are always engaged in little acts of devotion, and how pleasing these little attempts are to Him who is so easily pleased. When there is love in the heart, that love must express itself in a thousand little ways. And the Beloved understands and appreciates. "Whosoever offers Me a leaf, or a flower, or a fruit, or even a little cool water," Sri Krishna says, "he is very dear to Me and I accept his love-offering if it is made with a pure heart." It is not the gift, or the act, that counts, but the motive behind it. So it is not difficult to serve the Lord and to please Him, if our hearts are pure. The religious life is not drudgery. It is the greatest joy to serve God with love and devotion.

Saint Rose was a busy woman, but she always felt the presence of God. He was her Beloved. She would snatch short moments during the day, when she would talk to God as one would to a lover. And there would always come a response. Thus she held discourse with God in a very simple and pleasing manner.

One morning she was seated before an open window. Outside, a little bird began to sing at the top of his voice. St. Rose listened for a while. When the bird stopped singing St. Rose said to the bird, "Little friend, how beautifully you have sung the praise of my Lord. Let me also sing a song to Him." Then she sang with great delight. When her song was finished, at once the bird began to sing again. And when the bird stopped, St. Rose would sing. Thus an hour was spent in praising the Lord.

How simple, but how significant are these little stories in the lives of the saints. In this way holy men and women attain to a state of great perfection. Gradually their minds are weaned away from the world, and drawn towards God. This is what is meant by living the religious life. There must be a constant endeavour to approach closer to God. And this we may do, each one in his own way.

The Yogi makes this the only object of his life, so he adopts strong methods. He devotes most of his time in the practice of self-control and meditation. His life is austere, for he wants to become master of his body and mind, of his appetites and desires, of his thoughts. He therefore practises control of breath, he assumes different postures, is restricted in his diet, and lives in solitude. This is his method. And an excellent method it is for those whom it suits.

But we need not feel discouraged if we cannot follow in his footsteps. Sri Krishna says, "Of all the Yogis he who with his inner soul resting in Me with faith worships Me, him do I regard as the highest Yogi." We can all try to think of God, to worship Him, to send out to Him, our loving thoughts and prayers.

And how can we think of God? How shall we worship Him? How to commune with Him? These questions were much discussed before Sri Ramakrishna. And he replied: "God in His absolute aspect is without form but He can and does assume various forms, He can take any form He pleases and these forms are perceived by His devotees. Those who cannot meditate on God as possessing a form, may meditate on Him as Absolute Spirit beyond all forms. But this is not for every one. It is easier to think of Him in the personal aspect and clothed with form. This is just as true as the impersonal aspect, for God is both personal and impersonal, with form and beyond form." And Sri Krishna said, "In whatsoever form man worships Me, in that very form I appear before him." But the worship must of course be very sincere, and must be performed with a concentrated mind.

It is the testimony of great saints that they saw God in different forms, as Buddha, as Jesus, as Siva, as Vishnu, in the form of the image they worshipped, in male and female figures of light, as an ocean of Light, etc. Not only can God take any form instantly, and transform Himself into a divine personality but there are millions of divine forms always existing throughout the vast universe. Jesus, we are assured, is still living; Buddha is still living, thousands of divine Incarnations are still living in celestial spheres. And through intense, all absorbing love, devotion, prayer and meditation these divine souls come and commune with man.

The sceptic will ask, how is this possible? But the true devotee does not ask for explanations. He wants to taste the fruit, he wants to experience the bliss of God-realization, of seeing Him face to face, of conversing with Him, and of losing himself in God in divine union. He does not ask, how or why? He begins to practise.

Explanations are for those who have not yet reached that state of faith where they can set to work and practise devotion. All explanation is only an attempt of the mind to satisfy its doubts. But who can ever hope to explain the mystery of God's working

and power? God is beyond explanation; our mind cannot comprehend Him.

Through faith alone we can know Him, through faith we will be able to worship Him and be united with Him. Through faith we will be able to taste of that state of sublime ecstasy and bliss that comes with true devotion. Let us pray for that faith that will enable us to worship God with our whole heart. Then He will approach us in any form we desire, and He will fill our hearts with His divine presence. We will be filled with joy unspeakable—a joy that passes all ordinary human understanding. This is the promise of all great Avatars, of all the scriptures.

The devotee gives himself entirely to that divine Presence and losing all idea of his little self, melts into the Divine, conscious only of the bliss of existence. For God is bliss, and whosoever merges into Him becomes a conscious part of that supreme Bliss. So it has been said by Sri Krishna, "Fill thy mind with Me, be to Me devoted, worship Me. And taking Me for thy supreme Goal, surely thou shalt enter unto Me."

Through practice alone the Goal can be reached. And, "When the Lord is known, all fetters fall off, all suffering is at an end, birth and death are conquered, and the soul enjoys eternal freedom."

"Arise, awake, and stop not till the Goal is reached."

(Concluded.)

THE MEANING OF MAYA

By B. Chandrasekharia, M.A.

The theory of Māyā needs no introduction. It is a problem of first importance, and on it rests the philosophy of the Vedānta, especially the Sankara-Vedānta. It is generally believed that Sankara has held to the unreality of the universe, that only Brahman is real. Brahman is (अद्वितीय) Advitiya, not admitting of a second. It is also common, when this point has to be maintained, to quote the line ब्रह्म सत्यं जगन्मिथ्या, etc. (Brahman is real, and the world is unreal, etc.). But I feel that Sankara does not advocate any such view and that the spirit of the above quotation is totally different. In thinking that Sankara formulates the unreality or

falsity (मिथ्यात्व) of the world, we would be ascribing to him what is not found in his writings—either in the Sūtra-Bhāṣhya or in the Upanishad-Bhāṣhyas. And also the texts he comments upon do not support the interpretation stated above. It will eventually be shown that the statement Jagan-Mithyā needs, in order to be understood correctly, an important qualification. This qualification, I believe, does no violence to the text. It is on the other hand quite warranted. In suggesting it I will only be expressing what is implicit in the view.

It is clear that the doctrine of Māyā is concerned, whatever its implications, with a type of error in regard to metaphysical problems. It refers to an erroneous view very prevalent in the minds of the ordinary people. This error can according to the Vedānta be construed in two ways—in respect of the cosmos and in respect of the individual. According as it refers to one or the other it gets the name Māyā or Avidyā. This error is explained to be of the nature of darkness, or more correctly, of an obstacle, a screen. It hides the Real, the Self, from one's view. Now, the question at issue is—What is the nature of this entity, Māyā or Avidyā; of what stuff is it made?

The answer to this question is varied, and is a point on which Sankara and his interpreters part company. Put in other words, the question is—Does Māyā refer to an attitude or to an entity? Has it objective or subjective reality? Those who view it in an objective light have logically arrived at the conclusion in the interest of the Self, that the world does not in the final estimate exist; that it is only a shadow without any substance in it; a mere turn of speech (वाचार्थमणं विकारो नामधेयं). On the other hand those who regard it as having to do with the subjective standpoint have come to the conclusion that the Vedānta does not repudiate the existence of the world, but that it also is real, though not in the same sense and to the same extent; that it is quite in a line with the Supreme Reality, is its own expression, and has a degree of reality.

One inference however is obvious. In either case the world is denied an independent status. It is admitted on all hands that it has no independent existence, that it is by no means self-supporting. But this assertion can be understood in two ways, namely, that the world is unreal and that it has a relative reality and value. I believe the latter to be the more natural meaning, fully borne out by the texts.

We may examine the first view. It may be objected beforehand that this point involves a digression. It does not ; for the answer to the question whether the universe exists or not decides beyond any doubt the meaning of Māyā. The first view, then, affirms on the basis of texts like नेह नावास्ति किञ्चन (There is no plurality here) and of instances like शुक्तिरजत (silver superimposed on mother-of-pearl) रज्जुसर्प (snake superimposed on rope) or गन्धर्वनगरी (castle in the air) that the world does not exist at all, that it is an illusion, a chimera (मरुमरीचिका), an unsubstantial pageant made of the stuff of which dreams are composed, and that one who takes it seriously is a fool. The reason for this is clear. It is that Brahman is the only real Being and that there is no other rival to It. In the face of it the world has not a jot of reality. Its so-called empirical reality (व्यावहारिक सत्ता) is a concession to the popular demand. That is all. Its real nature is that it is only an idea ; it has only a "transcendental ideality" ; it exists only in one's imagination and is but a projection of the mind. In terms of the infinite, it vanishes into nothingness. And so on. This theory is too well-known and popular to be dwelt on at any great length. In respect of this view Māyā means a projection of false appearances, and the world becomes a rainbow world.

This interpretation of Māyā rakes up a few difficulties. It is well that the sole reality of the Real or Brahman is emphasised but it is not good that it should be done at the expense of something else. No one disagrees with a Vedantin for emphasising the sole reality of Brahman. Brahman is One (एक), but the enthusiast in the cause of Brahman forgets that Brahman is also described to be without a second (अद्वितीय). It is clear that unless the language in this text is tautologous, there is a subtle difference in the meaning. The two words have, I take it, two shades of meaning. The same difference of meaning or emphasis is conveyed to us in the other term Advaita (अद्वैत). The motive underlying this mode of description seems to be not to call this world a falsity, but to co-ordinate it with the Real. The first term may safely be taken in its denotation, and the second in its connotation, it being understood the while that the two point to one being, and that, the Infinite अद्वितीय (One without a second) appears to be not only a negative mode of statement, but also carries a reference to the universe which is in no way to be opposed to the Real. I am sure that I am not forcing the text at this point. If it be objected that the latter would not be the natural interpretation and that there is no reference to the universe as Brahman's self-manifestation, the

reply would be that there is equally no reference to the unreality of the universe. For when it is affirmed that Brahman is without a second, without an other (अन्य), it does not follow that the world is thereby taken to be abolished. We cannot argue from the unity and supremacy of Brahman to the negation of the world. There is no middle term. We will not be right in saying that unity should abrogate diversity, that identity should rule out difference. It is hardly necessary to mention the commonplace that bare identity is as impossible and meaningless as mere difference exclusive of its undercurrent of unity. Besides, the word अद्वितीय does not mean "not different", i. e., "not having difference", but it means *not having an other*. In "Advaita" there is the same import. I do not know that not to have an other means not to have difference also related to it. Though the self and the other are different the Self and *its own difference* are not different.

The view in question is open to another criticism. It has neglected to take due note of texts which countenance a different theory; texts supporting the existence of the universe have been omitted. The rejection seems to be one-sided, if not interested and for that reason exclusive. This one-sidedness has produced the consequence of a differentiation between the Nirguna (without attributes) Brahman and Its Saguna (with attributes) form without Its remaining fluid and theoretical. This is strictly speaking untrue and is calculated to patch up the other part to the one the view favours. In spite of Sankara and the Vedanta Sutras one assumes that Brahman is Nirguna always, one will perforce explain away the universe. The Nirguna form represents the identity-aspect, and to take it to those noumenal heights to which some have taken it, is only to make a fetish of it. Sankara thinks that the two forms are due only to the standpoint adopted; and in the light of this opinion there is no doubt that he does not endorse the view that the universe is in respect of its existence a myth, a dream. Besides, it becomes extremely difficult if not impossible, to reconcile texts like नेह नानास्ति किञ्चन (There is no plurality here) with others like सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्म (All this is Brahman) with which the Upanishads, both the earlier and the later, are replete. The term नाना has a totally different import and stands in quite another relation, as will be shown subsequently. I will not anticipate myself however.

I will refer to the second interpretation. According to it the world is in no wise unreal. It is real it holds, but makes a quali-

fication. It is real, but not real enough. And it is not real enough in two senses. In the first place, it does not endure, is not made of permanent stuff. Its forms are ever changing. Secondly, it is not real enough to stand on its own legs. In this respect it is totally dependent. It has not an atom of reality which it can call its own. That is to say, the world is not in itself real. This is the qualification so needed, and the implication which one and all the Vedanta texts on the subject appear to have. Further it is dependent on the Infinite, not as an alien principle kept under control, but as something belonging to it more intimately. The universe is on this interpretation Brahman's self-realisation. The names and forms so characteristic of the world are only modes of this self-realisation. One is here put in mind of Spinoza and his theory. The mode or expression would be imaginary were it not supported by the Real, were it not in short the mode or expression of the Real. This is the same as saying that the world is not real in its own right. To my mind it is just this meaning that is implied in the assertion such as the one cited above. On this view not only can we explain passages of the Upanishads like ईशावास्यमिदं सर्वं (All this to be enveloped by the Lord) etc. and terms like विश्वरूप (with universal form) and वैश्वानर (Universal Being) but other passages relating to "Nirguna" Brahman which will also be seen to accord with it. The same is true of passages in the Vedanta Sūtras. It may be mentioned in passing that those who interpret the Upanishadic and the Brahma Sūtra passages as referring to Mayavada (मायावाद) are but reading into them what exists in their own mind.

The world has a status. It is not unreal, but does not compete with the Real, just because it is not an other. The advocates of the Mayavada (मायावाद) appear to take it for granted that it has an independent status and build their argument on that premiss. They seem implicitly to assume that position. Passages describing Brahman as cause should, I hope, make it abundantly clear to any one that the reality of the world is admitted and that the world follows as an effect from Brahman as both the material (उपादान कारणं) and the efficient cause (निमित्तकारणं). As emanating from the Infinite (जन्मादि अस्य यतः) the universe is real, but less in comparison since it is changing, just as the dream-world has a lower degree of reality than the world of waking experience. The effect does not exhaust the cause. And to assert in the teeth of these evidences that the world is but a shadow is to play no honest game.

Now, this detailed reference to the interpretations was necessary in order that the meaning or implication of Māyā might be brought out clearly. If it is true that the world exists, then how is "Māyā" to be understood? We have made the qualification that the world as such does not exist, and that to take it at its face value would be a gross error. That is to say, we are not questioning the existence of the world but we are questioning its value or meaning. Is it a plurality (गण) or is it a unity, is the question. It is plain that I incline to the latter view. In other words, we are asking a question about the right attitude. Should it favour the manyness of the Real, or its oneness? Do we see many reals or only one Real everywhere? Such questions indicate the shifting of the view point. What is our attitude is the crux of the problem. And the term Māyā and Mayavada (मायावाद) are concerned, not with existence, but with meaning, not with the objective aspect but with the subjective one of the question (see Kath Up. 4, 10, and Brihad. Up. ii, 4, 14. The "इव"—as it were—used in these two places refers to the attitude and supports our view). They seek to explain, not so much the falsity of the world in respect of its being, as its falsity in respect of its pluralistic value. And they arrive, I take it, at the conclusion that its manyness is not the last word to be said about the matter: this point will be explained presently.

The upholders of the first interpretation put the cart before the horse. They take up the objective side and the subjective one is neglected. There is a definite method of approach to the problem. Everyone knows that in the Vedānta, just as in the Upanishads there are two editions of the problem—the cosmic and the individual. The problem is viewed in both its aspects—the aspect concerned with the subject, and the one concerned with the object. Of these, the former leads the way. The nature of the cosmos is taken to be built on the same principle as that of the individual. The macrocosm repeats the structure of the microcosm. There is that homogeneity, that unity of principle. But of the two the individual aspect has greater importance. To me this is what Sankara drives at in employing the term शरीरक मीमांसा (Sariraka Mimamsa). "Know thyself first" he appears to say. This assertion of the primacy of the individual is not unfamiliar. One meets it as early as in Rigveda X, 90, and this is the background in which the Upanishadic teaching as a whole is set. The Vedānta emphasises the Ātman, the Jiva, its experiences and psychic states,

knowledge, truth, error, and so on. These terms form part and parcel of the language of the soul or self, and the ideas they convey of the philosophy of the soul. The very term Ātman, the self, whether it means the individual self or the universal self, indicates the drift of ideas. And the concept of Moksha, relevant only in the case of the individual, is a conclusive proof of the primacy of the individual standpoint. The distinction into Saguna and Nirguna Brahman, into Parā and Aparā Vidyā reflects the reference to the subjective attitude.

The doctrine of Māyā is a theory of error. It is to be approached from the side of the individual. Error concerns not existence, but standpoint. That is, it pertains to predication, and that, to false predication. The Vedanta calls it Avidyā. The difference between the ordinary kind and the Vedanta Avidyā is that one is an error of commission, and the other, an error of omission. They are two species of the same kind. In Vedanta the error of omission consists in one's failure to recognise and keep up the truth. When paraphrased thus, it will be seen that this error, Avidyā, is not radically different from the other one. Both lead to the same consequence, viz., false predication. We ascribe in either case to reality a quality, a being or a condition which cannot be true of it (compare Bosanquets's view of error; Logic, Vol X. Also Sankara's definition of Avidyā as अतस्मिन् तद्बुद्धिः—introduction to the Brahma Sutras). We ascribe to the Real qualities and relations which do not obtain in It. (Instances like रज्जु तर्पे शक्ति-रजत). The difficulty about finite predication is that at best it is partial; the qualities and relations we think of as inherent in the Absolute are hedged in by their opposites. They are in and fall short of the Absolute (One is reminded of—यतो वाचो निवर्तन्ते अप्राप्य मनसासह). The Vedanta analyses the case and goes to the root of the matter. It traces error to our ignorance of our true nature. The sum total of conditions and interests acquires the name Māyā or Avidyā. Avidyā is a hindrance (उपाधि). It is like darkness in enveloping the Self. The personal viewpoint obscures the light. Belief colours knowledge. To overcome this ignorance constitutes the goal of one's efforts. On it rests the dignity and worth of the human being.

There is the cosmic edition of Avidyā, Māyā. While under its influence, we take diversity to be the ultimate fact. While it lasts we take things to be real in themselves. Our behaviour is initiated by it. This is a total false regard, and has its roots in Avidyā. Our

ignorance stretches over the universe, and pushes back or obscures Brahman. Avidyā rendered in terms of the cosmos is Māyā.

So much for Avidyā or Māyā as cause. It is not only a force that creates in us an attitude, but represents the effect also. It is the phenomenal creation as well as its principle. The effect aspect is thrown into relief in the term Māyā. It denotes also the world. The world is Māyā, the मायावादिन (Mayavadim) says. The meaning is that it is an illusion created by a delusion. The world *as the world* is an illusion, an unreality. It dwindles into nothingness if it sets up against the Real in its claims to reality.

The world *as the world*. The qualification makes a difference to facts. Facts are what they are, and what exists cannot be destroyed (cf. McTaggart: Nature of Existence). Everything exists and lays claim to reality. But its claims can be granted only when it claims to be real *through* the Real; when it claims to be a form of expression of the Real. Otherwise it has to be denied all reality. This is exactly the meaning of defining Māyā as **ब्रह्माश्रय** (dependent on Brahman). The force and the effect are both rooted in Brahman. In this sense the world is not an illusion, a fictitious nothing, but an appearance (compare Bradey), a concrete manifestation. Even illusions are made up of facts pieced together (while the illusion lasts the rope is actually taken to be a snake; we cannot say that the experience is unreal, but it is corrected later on). The changing forms are facts: but they do not change or affect in any way the underlying substance, the Infinite. In regard to existence all things are on one level. They are on different levels in regard to meaning, value and reality. The world has a definite amount of meaning, value, and a certain degree of reality.

Jagat is described to be **अनिर्वचनीय** (inexplicable) and **सदसद्विशिष्ट** (different from what is real and also unreal). It cannot be classified as real in the absolute sense, for it can in no wise cope with the Infinite Self. It is not unreal because it is a fact; seems to be real. It has a peculiar, and perhaps inscrutable nature. But the significance is that Jagat as Jagat cannot stand. It should be resolved into Brahman. In terms of the Real it is real.

In sum Māyā denotes the view-point, and has an objective reference. The purport of the doctrine seems to be to enjoin on us the change of outlook. Diversity is a false abstraction leading us away from the truth. It is true of the *de facto* level. Outgrow this

level, and reach the Absolute One from which one sees and hears everywhere only Brahman. यस्तु सर्वाणि भूतानि आत्मन्येवावपश्यति सर्वभूतेषु च आत्मानम् "He who sees all beings in the Self and the Self in all beings" (Isa Up. 6.) defines the correct attitude. The view of the seers appears to be like this ; it does not matter, in the first instance what facts are, but see that you have acquired the true outlook i.e., the subjective side first. And after that, learn that unity, not plurality, is the final word. Of course the two parts of the teaching run *pari passu* : pluralism is to be rejected in favour of monism. The stamp is rejected in favour of the gold. But diversity is not denied thereby. It has been subsumed, interpreted in the language of the universal Self, and has acquired its true meaning and position. For the enlightened, the world does not exist but as Brahman. The life that a Jivanmukta leads is a forceful illustration of the point. He loses sight of the trees for the wood, of the waves for the ocean.

Thus it is the meaning, the importance, not the existence of diversity that is at stake in the theory of *Māyā*. It is not its unreality, but its finality that is called in question ; not the otherness, but the "otherness-attitude". If the world is false or true, it is false or true in reference to its meaning. It is not false in the sense in which शशविषाण (horn of a hare) is false (अलीक). Variety becomes unimportant, not extinct, when the true view is gained.

Editor's Note.

In the last issue of the *Vedanta Kesari* we had the pleasure of publishing Prof. K. Sundararama Aiyar's learned article on *Maya* interpreted in the light of Sankara's philosophy. The present article discusses the same topic from a different standpoint. The writer has tried to prove that the world or *Maya* is not an unreality but an eternal reality dependent on Brahman. He thinks that Sankara also holds this view in the *Sūtra Bhashya* and *Upanishad-Bhashyas*.

But what the commentator admits is that the world has only a *Vyavaharika* or relative reality. He never allows it a *Paramarthika* (absolute) reality, as the writer seems to do. Sankara is very clear on the point. As such we are at a loss to understand how he can be taken to support the conclusion arrived at in this article. What Sankara holds to be relatively true, the writer takes to be absolutely true.

The writer does not seem to have grasped the difference which Sankara and other Vedantic teachers make between the illustrations

of false knowledge, such as "snake superimposed on rope", "silver superimposed on mother-of-pearl" and "mirage" on the one hand and the impossibles—such as "horn of the hare", "city of the Gandharvas" or castles in the air, "son of a barren woman"—on the other. The former class has a relative reality, while the other is non-existent under all circumstances, and has no basis for superimposition. The mistaken vision of the snake, silver or mirage is dependent on the rope, mother-of-pearl or surface of the desert. Such also is the relation of the world to Brahman, as Sankara distinctly points out :—

"The objects of ordinary life have a relative reality". Taitriya Bhashya—II.13. But "As the water of a mirage is not really different from the surface of the desert, so the manifold world with its objects of enjoyments, enjoyer and so on has no separate existence apart from Brahman". Brahma Sutra Bhashya, II. i. 14.

"In reality there is no second thing excepting that, if there be any, it is nothing but the superimposition of nescience." Brihadaranyaka Bhashya, IV—iv—19.

The world exists in ignorance; it disappears with the dawn of the highest knowledge. Says Sankara—"The entire complex world of phenomenal existence is considered as true so long as the knowledge of Brahman as the Self of all has not arisen, just as the phantoms of a dream are considered to be true until the sleeper wakes," Vedanta Sutra Bhashya, II. i. 14.

"We must remember that the so-called real creation with its ether, air, etc. is not ultimately real. The entire expanse of things is mere illusion. The world consisting of ether etc., however, remains fixed and distinct up to the moment when the soul cognises that I Brahman is the Self of all." Vedanta Sutra Bhashya, II—ii—4.

Commenting on Isha Upanishad, Sloka 7, Sankara says—"Absolute negation of the world which is nothing but an effect, is here stated in so far as the scriptures show, by raising an objection, the impossibility of pain and delusion which are the products of nescience."

Innumerable passages of this kind may be quoted from the writings of Sankara. The great commentator holds that the ignorant man looks upon the world as it appears to be the sole reality; but the man of the highest knowledge experiences Brahman to be

the only Truth, the world having disappeared from his view altogether. Again, when the knower comes down from his spiritual height to the lower plane, he sees the world but knows it to be an apparent existence. This "passing show" may continue during his Jivan-mukti or state of emancipation during life; but it stops completely with the attainment of Videha-mukti or final liberation that comes after the falling off of the body. We would request the writer to read the commentaries and other works of Sankara carefully, and see for himself whether we are justified in our remarks or not.

THE AGE OF THE ŚUDRAS.

By R. Ramakrishnan, B.A.

The study of History has its advantages; for knowledge is its own reward and it has utility as well. We can, from a knowledge of the past, obtain glimpses into the future—glimpses that might not be far from the truth. However chaotic and apparently unregulated might be the march of progress, everything in the universe is subjected to a great law that never changes and never slackens in its vigour of application. Hence can the future be surmised from the study of the past and the present, and surmised correctly too, because of the 'rule of law.' Two more points we shall have to remember. One is that change is the law of the universe; "The old order changeth yielding place to new" and the poet moralises on this grand truth, that "God fulfils Himself in many ways lest one good custom should corrupt the world." Hence this change is not destroying the old order of things, but evolving out of it a new order that is not different from but is merely the outcome of the old one. This process of evolution and not the thorough-going transformation is in accordance with another universal law—the law of continuity. Inasmuch as this is so, are we to welcome a change or to struggle against it? Certainly the former should be done. Since progress means readjustment, its course is bound to be a bit harsh; it cannot travel on smooth oiled wheels. So, only those blessed with a broader outlook, a larger heart, a more sympathetic vision, could penetrate into the future and welcome this setting-in of the new order. Narrow-minded people cannot but oppose it.

The other point is this—If we look at the world's history as a whole, we find that there is an undercurrent of uniformity in it.

Several nations have had their own peculiar historical developments yet can we find out a similarity and unity amidst the varying kinds of development. We shall try to do this in regard to one sphere—that of the preponderance of one particular class over the others.

It has been the happy task of hostile and friendly critics to find fault with the Indian caste system in season and out of season. But they comfortably forget that this 'peculiar' development is not singular to India but is common throughout the world. It is another testimony to the sound common sense and the practical intellect of our hoary ancestors—whose very names we do not know—that they divided society into four classes—the Brahmana, the Kshatriya, the Vaisya and the Sudra. Nobody denies that the caste system has outgrown its purpose, nor could it be asserted that it has come down unchanged. The centre of gravity and importance has not continued as of old. Further it is an acknowledged fact that the caste system was a practical form of division of labour and served its purpose.

In the beginning the Brahmin held the supreme position in society; the centre of gravity rested on him,—a fact which is not after all unparalleled. The Brahmin represented the highest intellect and the most mature mind. He was the guide of society and the custodian of its spiritual life. He was the 'hero' whom the people followed. He had the honour of all and as he thought, his society thought too. Corresponding to this stage we find a similar state of affairs in other parts of the world. Take Greece for instance. We have Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and a host of 'heroes' who were the real sovereigns of the country in their time. In short, all these as well as the Brahmin formed the aristocracy of talent and intellect. This was the rule of the best few and the benefits of such a rule cannot be exaggerated. Even in the most thorough-going democracy the real rulers who wield all power are only a few. The Brahmins and the Rishis were the Vedic Seers, the authors of the Upanishads, the formulators of the religious code, and the preceptors of the people. They represented the chaste wisdom of the age and it is no wonder that they were in fact ruling the society. It was to them that the people looked up for guidance and advice and they were ever ready at their post of duty to enlighten and lead society to noble ideals. The aristocracy of intellect was the prevalent form of sovereignty in those days.

Perhaps it was this order of things that Oliver Cromwell wanted to bring back when he summoned a parliament of the oldest and the most experienced citizens of the land ; but his attempt was doomed to failure since the system had already decayed, yielding place to another.

Ages rolled on and times changed and with them the ideas of humanity. The aristocracy of intellect could not hold its sway any further. The second class of society—the Kshatriya got the place enjoyed by the Brahmin. Then came the day of the warriors ; they began to command the respect and reverence of society. They protected society and ruled it wisely and well. The Ramayana and the Mahabharata sing the praises of India's warrior heroes. Yudhishthira was revered even by Brahmins, though he was only a Kshatriya by caste. The one man who moved the thought of India came from this Kshatriya community. We mean Gautama the Buddha ; he was a Kshatriya and yet won the reverence of the whole of India and was even conferred an Avatarhood. Later came the Rajputs, whose heroic actions are well known to the world. Even the Rajput ladies were heroic and brave. Corresponding to this, we have in the West, the age of the knight-errants and the warrior lords. We have King Arthur and his Round Table ; we have Hereward the Wake and his noble exploits ; we have a thousand others whose heroic deeds are sung by many bards. It was the age of chivalry and of romance, when knights fought with dragons. It was to these men that society looked for guidance and, Society was led by them.

This age also had its day and it has been in turn succeeded by the age of the Vaisya,—the age of commercialism. We are in age to this day but it also is passing away. This age of the Vaisya is the age of capitalism. Capitalists are ruling society everywhere. Commercialism is the dominating factor today. Nations are united on that basis. But the attack has been already begun on this system. Socialism, Trade Unionism, Guild Socialism, Syndicalism, Communism—these are but different phases of the movement against commercialism. We are to-day on the verge of a mighty transformation. The age of the Vaisya is fast ebbing away and that of the Sudra is slowly coming in. A stigma is often attached to the word 'Sudra'. It really means one who serves. Service is not degrading to one's honour. In a sense everybody is a Sudra. The coming epoch is that of the labourer. He is to rule society hereafter. We are slowly marching towards that period ;

and all these agitations—sometimes running to extremes—are working to bring about that end. We are witnessing today the chaos of a transition stage. After this storm shall come peace and order and a regulated course of things.

It is futile to oppose and work against the inevitable. If we are wise, we should try to make its passage smooth and hasten its pace. All our leaders are working for it today. Swami Vivekananda too worked for the poor, the lowly and the down trodden, whom he called the Daridra-Narayanas. He was vehemently against Touch-me-not-ism. Mahatma Gandhi's Khaddar movement is for the betterment of the poor man's lot. Our leaders who are working for village re-construction are also doing the same. The future is assured. We have only to pray that its sway might be an enlightened one.

RAMKRISHNA PARAMHANSA.*

By Nagendranath Gupta

In 1881 Keshub Chandra Sen, accompanied by a fairly large party, went on board a steam yacht belonging to his son-in-law, Maharaja Nripendra Narayan Bhup of Kuch Behar, to Dakshinেশ্বর to meet Ramkrishna Paramhansa. I had the good fortune to be included in that party. We did not land, but the Paramhansa accompanied by his nephew Hriday, who brought a basket of parched rice and some *sandesh* for us, boarded the steamer which steamed up the river towards Somra. The Paramhansa was wearing a red bordered *dhoti* and a shirt which was not buttoned. We all stood up as he came on board and Keshub took the Paramhansa by the hand and made him sit close to him. Keshub then beckoned to me to come and sit near them and I sat down almost touching their feet. The Paramhansa was dark-complexioned, kept a beard, and his eyes never opened very wide and were introspective. He was of medium height, slender almost to leanness and very frail looking. As a matter of fact, he had an exceptionally nervous temperament, and was extremely sensitive to the slightest physical pain. He spoke with a very slight but charming stammer in very plain Bengali, mixing the "yous" frequently. All the talking was practically done by the Paramhansa, and the rest, including Keshub himself, were respect-

ful and eager listeners. It is now more than forty-five years ago that this happened and yet almost everything that the Paramhansa said is indelibly impressed on my memory. I have never heard any other man speak as he did. It was an unbroken flow of profound spiritual truths and experiences welling up from the perennial spring of his own devotion and wisdom. The similes and metaphors, the apt illustrations, were as striking as they were original. At times as he spoke he would draw a little closer to Keshub until part of his body was unconsciously resting in Keshub's lap, but Keshub sat perfectly still and made no movement to withdraw himself.

After he had sat down the Paramhansa glanced round him and expressed his approval of the company sitting around by saying, "Good, good : They have all good large eyes." Then he peered at a young man wearing English clothes and sitting at a distance on a capstan. "Who is that ? He looks like a Saheb." Keshub smilingly explained that it was a young Bengali who had just returned from England. The Paramhansa laughed "That's right. One feels afraid of a Saheb!" The young man was Kumar Gajendra Narayan of Kuch Behar, who shortly afterwards married Keshub's second daughter. The next moment he lost all interest in the people present and began to speak of the various ways in which he used to perform his *sadhana*. "Sometimes I would fancy myself the Brahminy duck calling for its mate." There is a poetic tradition in Sanscrit that the male and female of a brace of Brahminy ducks spend the night on the opposite shores of a river and keep calling to each other. Again, "I would be the kitten calling for the mother cat and there would be the response of the mother." After speaking in this strain for sometime he suddenly pulled himself up and said with the smile of a child, "Everything about secret *Sadhana* should not be told." He explained that it was impossible to express in language the ecstasy of the divine communion when the human soul loses itself in the contemplation of the deity. Then he looked at some of the faces around him and spoke at length on the indications of character by physiognomy. Every feature of the human face was expressive of some particular trait of character. The eyes were the most important but all other features, the forehead, the ears, the nose, the lips and the teeth were helpful in the reading of character. And so the marvellous monologue went on until the Paramhansa began to speak of the Nirakara (formless) Brahman. "The manifestation of the Formless has to be realised." He repeated the word Nirakara two or three times and then quietly

passed into *Samadhi* as the diver slips into the fathomless deep. While the Paramhansa remained unconscious, Keshub Chandra Sen explained that recently there had been some conversation between himself and the Paramhansa about the Nirakara Brahman and the Paramhansa appeared to be profoundly moved.

We intently watched Ramkrishna Paramhansa in *Samadhi*. The whole body relaxed and then became slightly rigid. There was no twitching of the muscles or nerves, no movement of any limb. Both his hands lay in his lap with fingers tightly interlocked. The sitting posture of the body was easy but absolutely motionless. The face was slightly tilted up and in repose. The eyes were nearly but not wholly closed. The eyeballs were not turned up or otherwise deflected, but they were fixed and conveyed no message of outer objects to the brain. The lips were parted in a beatific and indescribable smile, disclosing the gleam of the white teeth. There was something in that wonderful smile which no photograph was ever able to reproduce.

We gazed in silence for several minutes at the motionless form of the Paramhansa and then Trailokya Nath Sanyal, the singing apostle of Keshub Chunder Sen's Church, sang a hymn to the accompaniment of a drum and cymbals. As the music swelled in volume the Paramhansa opened his eyes and looked around him as if he were in a strange place. The music stopped. The Paramhansa looking at us said, "Who are these people?" And then he vigorously slapped the top of his head several times, and cried out, "Go down, go down!" No one made any mention of the trance. The Paramhansa became fully conscious and sang in a pleasant voice, "What a wonderful machine Kali, the Mother has made!" After the song the Paramhansa gave a luminous exposition as to how the voice should be trained to singing and the characteristics of a good voice.

It was fairly late in the evening when we returned to Calcutta after landing the Paramhansa at Dakshineswar.

* * * *

The Paramhansa died in 1886. That was the third year of my stay at Karachi, but, just about that time I happened to be in Calcutta. I followed the bier of the Paramhansa to the burning-ghat. All the disciples, including Vivekananda, were there and Trailokya Nath Sanyal was also present.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

MAHATMA GANDHI ON SISTER NIVEDITA

In a recent instalment of his "*Story of My Experiments with Truth*"—Part III, Chapter XIX—Mahatma Gandhi writes :—

"I then ascertained the place of residence of Sister Nivedita, and saw her in a Chowringhee Mansion. I was taken aback by the splendour that surrounded her, and even in our conversation there was not much meeting ground. I spoke to Gokhale about this and he told me that he did not wonder that there could be no point of contact between me and a volatile person like her."

"I met her again at Mr. Pestonji Padshah's place. I happened to turn up just as she was talking to his old mother, and so I became an interpreter between the two. In spite of my failure to find an agreement with her, I could not but notice and admire her overflowing love for Hinduism. I came to know of her books later."

The above remarks give a very false idea of the illustrious Sister, and do great wrong to her memory. We do not question the sincerity with which Mahatma Gandhi gives expression to his thoughts. But for the sake of Truth we must point out that he has got an altogether wrong impression of the great soul that lived and died for the cause of India. Mahatma Gandhi saw very little of the real Sister Nivedita. And it is no wonder that insufficient knowledge, that is always "dangerous," would create a great misunderstanding.

Mahatma Gandhi evidently saw the Sister at the American Consulate in Chowringhee, where she was temporarily staying as the guest of some of her American friends who came to visit India about the time he met her. Neither the mansion nor the splendour with which he was taken aback were Nivedita's. Her usual "mansion" was a small, old house in a lane in a humble quarter of Northern Calcutta, where, to quote the words of an English friend, she "preferred an ascetic life to the comforts and luxuries of her Western home." And the "splendour" that used to surround her usually at the small girls' school conducted by her came as a surprise to many of her visitors. Thus describes one of her lady students in a short sketch on the Sister—"The school house is far from being healthy or well-ventilated. The rooms are small and the roof very low. During the summer (when the school remains closed) the rooms get so hot that half an hour's stay there will make the head ache There was no fan hung in Nivedita's room. She always used to have a hand-fan about her. The small compartment allotted to her, she decorated according to her own tastes. Most of the day she used to stay in that room buried in her work."

At the express wish of her Master, Swami Vivekananda, Nivedita dedicated herself to the cause of the school. She used to spend some time in teaching the girls. But the major portion of her time had to be devoted to literary work undertaken for maintaining the school. Sometimes she had to pass through great economic difficulties. On all such occasions the first thing she used to do was to cut short her very limited personal expenses. She would deny herself even the bare necessities of life. And as the result of this hardship she often suffered greatly in health. To those who knew and could appreciate the story of her self-imposed and life-long penance, Nivedita, the Brahmacharini was the very personification of steadfastness and one-pointed devotion. To call her a "volatile" person is not only to misunderstand her but also to dishonour her blessed memory. We do not know who is really responsible for this unhappy expression. But whoever he may be, Mahatma Gandhi's experiment with Truth in the case of the illustrious Sister has not been a success. It would have been a complete failure had he not been able, in spite of his disagreement with her, to "notice and admire her overflowing love for Hinduism."

It is unfortunate that Mahatma Gandhi did not find any meeting point in his conversation with Sister Nivedita. But the idea that there could be no point of contact between them is preposterous. The Sister was a many-sided genius. She was a great spiritual idealist, a passionate votary of her adopted motherland, a vehement champion of Indian culture, a writer of rare literary abilities, an enthusiastic interpreter of Indian life and art, a most forceful leader of the national movement, a humble worker for the cause of Indian manhood, all in one. And many of the greatest sons of India found points of agreement with her, and could be counted as her life-long friends.

But like the greatest men and women of the world, she had her own ways of making friends. A complex personality that she was, she combined a hero's will with the spotless purity, kindly heart and self-sacrificing love of a perfect Brahmacharini. Even in the midst of her sweetness and tenderness, there was something in her character that might be termed militant. And rarely could one be included among her friends without facing an encounter with her. No wonder that after being the object of her sudden onslaught, some felt a sort of disagreement with her. In the words of one of her friends,—Mr. A. J. F. Blair, "Friendship with Nivedita was not a slow growth. It sprang to maturity at the first meeting, or not at all, and I do not know that any one was ever privileged to know the depths of her womanly kindness without first being subjected to that moral test." But to one once admitted to her friendship she would open her heart and give herself without any reserve. Often after an apparent disagreement there would come a great understanding, and one could feel that "no kinder-hearted women ever breathed." It was not given to all, as has been the case with Mahatma Gandhi, to fully discover "the inexhaustible mine of gold" that Sister Nivedita really was. Why it was so seems to be beyond the comprehension of ordinary mortals.

SHIVAJI AND RELIGIOUS TOLERATION

The tercentenary of Shivaji—the great Mahratta hero—was celebrated all over India during the last week of April and the first week of May. This widespread celebration is a clear proof of the new spirit that is swaying over the country, bringing together peoples of different parties and provinces, castes and denominations, in their worship of the great national heroes of India. There was a time when the Indians literally believed the alien historians, who through ignorance, bias or motive, described Shivaji as a dangerous brigand and freebooter. But thanks to modern researches, the real greatness and glory of the Mahratta King is being revealed and appreciated all over the land. This changed attitude is described by Rev. Dr. Macnical—a sympathetic Christian missionary—"Shivaji belongs to no class or caste; he is a national possession. He may be said indeed to have come to rebirth in the hearts of his countrymen, not of Maharashtra alone but of all India in the national awakening of the last twenty years."

Shivaji was an embodiment of the spirit of freedom and independence. And in spite of his great struggle with the Mughal power, he possessed a unique religious toleration that was in fact an inseparable part of his noble nature. He fought against the Delhi Emperor not because the latter was a Mussalman, but because he was a menace to the religious and political freedom of the people whom the great Mahratta wanted to save and protect. Shivaji employed numerous Mohammedans in his army and navy. His first military governor of Phonda was a Mussalman. Several admirals of his fleet were Mussalmans. He confirmed all religious service grants for mosques within his territory, and even endowed them liberally. His treatment of Mohammedan prisoners of war and of women was marked by high chivalry.

Shivaji gave expression to his religious catholicity in his famous letter to Aurangzeb, protesting against the imposition of the "infidel tax"—"Even in the Koran, God is styled as the Lord of all men, and not the Lord of the Mohammedans only. If it be a mosque the call to prayer is chanted in remembrance of Him. If it be a temple the bell is rung in yearning for Him only. To show bigotry for any man's creed is really altering the words of the holy book."

Shivaji was a Hindu of Hindus. He was an ardent disciple of the Great Mahratta Saint Ramdas, and a devout worshipper of the Divine Mother Bhavani. True to the ideals of his religion, he allowed full religious freedom within his kingdom. "He went further," Says Prof. Jadunath Sarkar in the *Modern Review* for May, "and though himself a pious Hindu he gave his state bounty to Muslim saints and Hindu Sadhus without distinction, and respected the Quran no less than his own scriptures." Would to God that the zealots and fanatics who are responsible for our communal struggles were inspired by this noble spirit of Shivaji!

NEWS AND REPORTS

VEDANTA CENTRE, BOSTON

Since his coming to the Boston Centre Swami, Akhilananda has been conducting two services on Sundays, and classes on the Gita and the Upanishads on Tuesdays and Thursdays respectively. On January 26th, the Swami represented Hinduism and spoke on "Fundamentals of my faith," at a conference held in the Central Church under the auspices of the Fellowship of Faiths. Nearly a thousand people gathered on the occasion. On February 27th, the Swami spoke on "Co-ordination of Life" in the New Thought Forum. The Hall of the Forum was well crowded. The Swami also attended another interesting meeting organised by the Fellowship of Faiths on the 16th of March, and spoke on "Who is my Neighbour?" in Mount Vernon Church.

The Centre celebrated the birthday of Swami Vivekananda on the 25th of January, when Swami Akhilananda cooked several Hindu dishes and served dinner to the friends present. There was a special devotional service in the evening. The public celebration came off on Sunday, January 30th, when Swami Akhilananda spoke on Swami Vivekananda's contribution to the world-thought. On the 5th of March, the Centre observed Sri Ramakrishna's birthday and Swami Akhilananda conducted the devotional service at 6 p.m. He also gave a talk on the religious practices of Sri Ramakrishna the same night. The public celebration took place on the 13th of March. Swami Paramananda arrived the previous day from the Ananda Ashrama. He conducted both the morning and evening services and spoke on the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna. At 3 p.m. the same day Swami Akhilananda delivered a lecture on "Sri Ramakrishna's Message of Harmony of Religions."

On the evening of March 29th, the Centre celebrated its 18th anniversary. Many old friends were present along with several new ones. A spirit of love and peace pervaded the whole atmosphere. Swami Paramananda recalled many interesting phases of the past history of the work and also told of the new developments and expansion of the work at Ananda Ashrama. Many spoke appreciatively of the society's activities and eulogised Swami Paramananda for spreading spiritual ideas and ideals and thereby helping to bring about a greater union of the East and the West.

ANANDA ASHRAMA, LA CRESCENTA

Sunday, January 30th was dedicated by the Ashrama to the celebration of Swami Vivekananda's Birthday. Swami Paramananda cooked Indian dishes and invited a number of guests for dinner. He paid a glowing tribute to Swami Vivekananda.

The birthday of Sri Ramakrishna which fell on Saturday, the 5th of March, was devoted to meditation and other spiritual practices. A special service was also conducted by the Swami. The

public celebration of Sri Ramakrishna's birthday came off next day when several hundreds of people congregated for both the morning and evening services. At noon two hundred people took part in the dinner and several were entertained later on. It was a real Indian feast-day. The Swami delivered two impressive lectures on the life and influence of Sri Ramakrishna. The Ashrama members arranged special music which was much appreciated by all present.

Since the opening of the new broadcasting station at La Crescenta, Swami Paramananda spoke on Wednesday evenings on "Rhythm of Life," "Man, the Maker of his Destiny" and "Faith in Humanity." After his departure for Boston on the 7th of March, Sister Daya with other members of the Ashrama has been continuing the broadcasting of the message through speech, poetry and music.

On his way to Boston Swami Paramananda halted at Chicago and delivered a lecture at the request of local friends.

OPENING OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA MATH, DELHI

A new Sri Ramakrishna Math was opened with great solemnity and enthusiasm at Gariston Road, Delhi on the 4th May last. Swami Sharvananda came to the imperial city from Kankhal especially for the occasion. The installation ceremony was performed in the morning. Swami Ambicananda conducted the Puja with due rites, ceremonies and offerings. A large number of devotees partook of a sumptuous feast at noon. A public meeting attended by more than three hundred of the local gentry, was held in the evening. Swami Ambicananda entertained the audience for an hour with his charming music, both vocal and instrumental. Swami Sharvananda next spoke on the ideals of the Ramakrishna Mission. The meeting terminated with the distribution of Prasad.

Swami Nirgunananda, who will be permanently attached to the Math, will hold at present three weekly classes—one at the Math and the other two at Raisina and Timarpur. The Math has removed a long felt want, and is sure to spread its beneficent influence among the students and the general public.

LECTURES BY THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SWAMIS.

Under the auspices of the Y. M. H. A., Nawalapitiya, Ceylon, Swami Avinashananda of the Ramakrishna Mission delivered two public lectures in the Kathiresan school Hall on the 5th and 7th May. On the first day the Swami spoke in Tamil on "Education." He clearly pointed out the superiority of the ancient system in which the pupil imbibed true culture and developed character through constant personal contact with the Guru to the present day system which did not help him much in this respect, but depleted the pockets of the parents. The Swami appealed to the parents and teachers to take a living interest in the type of education that is to be imparted in schools, and to live exemplary lives, which always influence children more than precepts. The next lecture was on the "Service of Man." The Swami spoke in English this time, and began by saying that true manhood lay not in talks but in action.

It is through properly directed activities that practical experience and real knowledge could be gained. Service of Jiva or man he said, was in reality service to Siva—the God in man. Through service to humanity undertaken without the expectation of reward, name or fame, one could attain to the realisation of the Omnipresent God, and in that lay the secret of Karma Yoga. After the lectures the Swami also gave suitable replies to questions from his listeners.

Under the auspices of the Vivekananda Society, Calcutta, Swami Vishwananda, President, Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Khar, Bombay, delivered a public lecture on the Sanatana Dharma at the Theosophical Hall, College Square, on Saturday, the 7th May. The Swami very lucidly explained the grand principles underlying the Hindu religion which was much appreciated by the audience.

Swami Saswatananda, Warden, Sri Ramakrishna Students' Home, Madras, gave a series of seven lectures on the Gita at Ootacamund between the 8th & 29th May last. The meetings were organised by the local Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama and were held at the Ashrama on Sundays and at Sri Venugopala Swami temple on Wednesdays at 5-30 in the evening to suit the convenience of the audience. The lectures have created a great interest among the local public.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA LIBRARY, PURI

A public meeting was held under the auspices of the Library on the 12th May at Sasi Niketan, Srijiut Rasik Mohan Vidyabhusan presiding. A large number of ladies were among the audience. Srimati Swarnalata Devi spoke eloquently on the message and teachings of Swami Vivekananda. Swami Siddhananda and Srijiut Lalit Mohan Ghosal appealed for funds for the Library.

BUDDHA DAY AT RAJKOT

The newly started Ramakrishna Ashrama at Rajkot observed the last Vaisakhi Purnima, rightly called "the thrice blessed day", with due solemnity. In the evening of the 16th May, select people of the place who love and admire Lord Buddha gathered at the Ashrama premises and spent two hours in quiet thought and communion.

The proceedings of the evening began with a song appropriate to the occasion, after which Swami Vividishananda gave a short discourse in English on the life and teachings of the Master. While narrating the inspiring life he brought out the keynote of Buddha's personality—his large heart that felt even for the meanest of living things, and showed the special significance of his advent. "He came to fulfil and not to destroy the Mother Church," said the Swami. His work was one of reformation and reorganisation. And this he did by democratising religion—by giving the higher moral and spiritual ideas to all irrespective of caste, creed and nationality. He made Vedanta practical by emphasising the love and service of men and beasts as a cardinal virtue. He did not give anything that was altogether new. He presented the Sanatana Dharma with added force and made it living. Although Buddhism as a separate Church is not to be found in India, the land of its birth, Buddha

continues to receive from the Hindus the same homage and worship as they show to Rama, Krishna and other incarnations." The Swami spoke also about the renaissance that followed in the wake of the Buddhist revival in India—the renaissance in art, literature, philosophy and higher learning.

Mr. H. N. Pandya, Pleader, Rajkot and another gentleman of the place also spoke a few words about the Master in Gujrati and touched the hearts of the audience. With "Rama Nama Sankirtan" the celebration came to a happy close.

SWAMI VIPULANANDA'S EVIDENCE BEFORE THE TAMIL UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE

Invited by the Tamil University Committee Swami Vipulananda—of the Ramakrishna Mission,—who is now working in Ceylon, gave evidence before it at Madura, on the 20th April last. The Swami said that he was not sure, about an actual demand for a separate Tamil University. As long as the Madras University supplied the needs of the Tamil country there was no necessity for a special University for the Tamil districts. He would have a well equipped Tamil academy or academies in different districts for the study of Tamil literature and philosophy with provisions for the comparative study of other languages, especially Sanskrit as a sort of research work. Such institutions should have common syllabus and must be recognised both by the Government and the University. He observed that a first class University college for oriental studies and research work, affiliated to the Madras University would satisfy the present demand for the preservation and study of Tamil.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAMA, PATNA

We are glad to receive the first general report of the Ashrama from its inception in June 1922 to December 1926.

Ever since it was started the institution has been rendering valuable service to the inhabitants of Patna in various ways—by holding religious classes in different parts of the city, arranging special lectures by distinguished speakers, rendering relief to the distressed, etc. The Ashrama maintained with great efficiency its Vivekananda Night School for the education of the labouring classes and Vivekananda Association for the moral, physical and intellectual culture of its members. It also conducts a library and the English weekly 'The Morning Star' which is popularising the institution both inside and outside the province.

It is regrettable to note that during the period under review the Ashrama had to meet a deficit of Rs. 370, the total amount of subscription received being Rs. 3,639 and the disbursement, Rs. 4,009.

The Ashrama requires a commodious building of its own with a permanent fund sufficient for its upkeep. This is estimated at Rs. 80,000 of which Rs. 9,701 have been till now donated. An appeal has been issued on behalf of the Ashrama by some of the prominent gentlemen of Behar. We hope the large-hearted public will help the Ashrama liberally and enable it to be of greater service to the country.

THE VEDANTA KESARI

"Let the lion of Vedanta roar."

"Let me tell you, strength, strength is what we want
And the first step in getting strength is to uphold
The Upanishads and believe that 'I am the Atman,'"

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

VOLUME XIV]

JULY 1927

[NUMBER 3

PRAYER.

ओं

विधात्री धर्माणां त्वमसि सकलान्नायजननी
त्वमर्षानां मूलं धनद्वनमनीयात्रिकमले ।
त्वमादिः कामानां जननि कृतकंदर्पविजये
सतां भक्तैर्वाजं त्वमसि परममङ्गमहिषी ॥
अथः स्वर्गं लभं सपदि लभते हेमपद्मीं
यथा रथ्यापाथः शुचि भवति गंगौषमिलितम् ।
तथा तत्तत्पपिरतिमलिनमंतर्मम यदि
त्यपि प्रेम्णा सकं कथमिव न जायेत विमलम् ॥

Thou art the Mother of all scriptures and the regulator of all religious paths. Thou art the root of all wealth, and Thy lotus feet are worshipped even by the giver of wealth. O Mother! Thou art the primal cause of all desires. Victress of passions, Thou art the seed of devotion for the good. Thou art the consort of the Great Brahman.

Iron touched by the touchstone becomes at once gold; water of the road being mixed with that of the Ganges becomes pure. In like manner, will not my heart, greatly soiled though it be by many sins, become pure if attached with devotion to Thee?

SANKARACHARYA,

SPIRITUAL TALKS OF SWAMI BRAHMANANDA

(At the Ramakrishna Mission Sevashram, Kankhal, Hardwar)

THIS place is very sacred. Here it is not difficult to attain concentration of the mind. The very atmosphere is pure. The holy Ganges and the majestic Himalayas naturally induce the mind to become calm and meditative. The eternal sound of Omkara can be heard here. Having come to this place you must make the best use of these advantages. It will be really unfortunate if you spend away your time in sleep and idleness. Far better to give up your body in this place while practising meditation and austerities.

Human birth is for the attainment of wisdom and devotion and not for living and procreating like brutes. God is most manifest in the human body ; try to grasp and realise this. Have you not heard what severe austerities the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna used to perform to realise the Truth? They all saw in Sri Ramakrishna a blazing fire of spirituality, and hence could do so much. It may not be possible for you to act like them. Swamiji gave away his very life for building up this organisation only with a view to give facilities to you all in your spiritual Sadhana. Try to realise the great love that Swamiji bore for you. In fact, he cut short his life by overwork out of his infinite love for you all. Don't be ungrateful to him. He had a great faith in Bengal. To you, young men of Bengal, Swamiji has left the charge of his mission as a sacred trust. Remain true and loyal to him. Sri Ramakrishna manifested himself to the world through Swami Vivekananda, and gave his message through him. Sri Ramakrishna is too great for the ordinary mind to understand. It is therefore that Swamiji has placed Sri Ramakrishna

and his ideals before the world in such a way as might be understood by the ordinary people. All blessed souls will have to come under his banner.

Read Swamiji's works carefully. And whenever you don't understand any point ask S.—and others to explain it. Swamiji has preached Sri Ramakrishna's ideals in a form intelligible to all. It is madness to try to understand Sri Ramakrishna except in the light of Swamiji's teachings. Read again and again the sayings of Sri Ramakrishna and Swamiji's works, and plunge yourselves in meditation. If you cannot fix your mind now, you will have to repent of it hereafter. This is the best part of your life. Make good use of it. Once you get yourself well established in the spiritual life there is no fear for you. Then you can turn your mind to any direction you like. Like a trained horse bring your mind under control. When this is done a good advance has been made. But take care—let not your mind swerve from the straight path even by an inch. When it wants to run astray curb it by all means.

Beginners should have a routine for spiritual practices with fixed hours for japam, meditation and study. With firm determination tell your mind, "Whether you like it or not, these rules must be followed." After sometime a habit will be formed, and it will be painful to remain without meditation. When such a state is attained it means you are progressing towards the ideal. Know that you are nearing God when you feel as restless for His vision as a hungry and sleepless man feels for food and sleep.

First get a taste of the Divine Bliss and become immortal. Then come what may, whether you are cast away in the street or placed on a throne it will be all the same to you. When the iron is turned into gold by the touch of the Philosopher's Stone, it does not matter whether it is kept in a safe or is buried in the ground.

Sri Ramakrishna used to say, "Have the knowledge of Advaita in your pocket and act as you please." After attaining the knowledge of the Absolute or supreme devotion to the Lord, whatever work you may do will not bind you.

Religious life is full of obstacles. The Divine Mother does not easily release men from the bonds of Her Maya. To obtain Her grace one should pray with a devout and yearning heart. You have the whole bundle of Samskaras (tendencies) acquired in previous lives to overcome, and even in this life some new Samskaras are being formed and added. All your life you must be prepared to fight these Samskaras. The more you resist them, the stronger do they become. If in the midst of defeats and disappointments you can stick to your path, you will surely reach the goal.

There are two tendencies in human nature, good and bad. The former tends towards renunciation and the latter towards enjoyments. There is a constant warfare between the two. The success or otherwise of the one over the other determines the nature of man.

Finding innumerable means of enjoyments in this world men become so much attached to them that they forget that there is another side of the picture. They think, "No one can be sure of the future ; so why should we not enjoy what we have at present ? No body knows whether God can be realised or not, whether Eternal Bliss is possible or not. But to enjoy the world is within our reach. Why should we therefore give it up ?" Consequently they rush headlong into enjoyments. But when bitter experiences teach them that enjoyments bring only pain and misery and not peace and happiness, they cry with disappointment when it is too late, "Alas, what have we done !" By following an unbridled life of enjoyment men become slaves of the senses.

EDITORIAL NOTES

Misunderstanding of Sankara.

Sri Sankaracharya—the great monistic philosopher and commentator—ushered in a new era in the religious history of India. He was the guiding spirit of the Hindu renaissance that followed the decline of Buddhism in the land of its birth. If the calculations of scholars are correct, twelve long centuries have elapsed since his advent and “spiritual conquest.” But the influence exerted by his philosophy, instead of diminishing, has been growing with the march of time. In the past Sankara had a greater following in India than any other Indian philosopher. And in modern times his system is gaining new adherents not only in India but also in foreign lands. It has won the great admiration of many Western scholars who have striven their best to popularise it in countries beyond the seas. And since the inauguration of the Vedanta movement in the West by Swami Vivekananda, Sankara has come to be the most widely known and highly honoured among the propounders of the Vedantic systems. But at the same time he has been unfortunately the most misunderstood of the Hindu philosophers, ancient or modern.

Buddha and Sankara.

If the task of Lord Buddha was to fulfil the Upanishadic faith, that of Sri Sankaracharya was to fulfil Buddhism in return. As such it is no wonder that the great teacher of monistic Vedanta has been called a crypto-Buddhist by sectarian writers and preachers. This misrepresentation of Sankara is by no means a new thing. The Padma Purana—a Vaishnava scripture—goes so far as to make God Siva himself declare—“Under the guise of a Brahmin (Sankara) I myself have taught in this iron age the false doctrine of Maya which is only

Buddhism in disguise. This extensive, non-vedic, deceptive doctrine has been propounded by me with a view to destroy all beings." The passage is an example of how bigotry and fanaticism can manufacture myths and fables in order to discredit the teacher of an opposite school of thought. It also reminds one of the misconception which the "crypto-Buddhist"—Sankara himself entertained about the original Buddha and his teachings. Sankara mistook Buddhism for the atheistic schools of philosophy in the mazes of which the original sublime teachings of the Enlightened One were completely lost. And like others of his time, he ascribed the opposite systems of Buddhistic thought to Lord Buddha himself. That is the reason why he wrote in his refutation of Buddhism—"Sugata or Buddha shows his delirious inconsistency by propounding contradictory philosophies; or the object of his doing this was to delude people by means of mutually opposite doctrines." This is a clear case of misunderstanding. But whatever may be its cause, the great point of difference between later Buddhism and Vedanta was with regard to the belief in the ultimate Reality, as Sankara clearly states—"Buddhism wears a semblance to the Advaita, but it is not that absolutism which is the pivot of the Vedanta Philosophy." Both the original Buddhism and the Advaita Vedanta had for their background the teachings of the Upanishads which hold up the realisation of the Truth beyond all thought and speech as the highest goal of life. But later Buddhism forgot this transcendental Reality and degenerated into nihilism. This was the chief reason why it was re-absorbed and supplanted by the Vedanta which has ever remained the crown and glory of the Vedic religion and philosophy.

The Truth about the World.

Sankara was not a mere speculator. He was primarily a seer of the highest type, who realised the Truth

with his unerring intuitive vision. His system of philosophy, unmatched for its metaphysical depth and logical subtlety, was therefore based on his direct experience of the Reality. He spoke of things as he saw and not as he imagined. When he declares "In reality there is no second ; if there be any, it is nothing but the superimposition of nescience," he refers to the state of realisation described by him in detail in the Vivekachudamani—"My mind has vanished, and all its activities have melted away, by realising the identity of Brahman and the self." Just as individuality ceases to exist with the dawn of knowledge, so also the world. And Sankara exclaims with wonder—"Where has the universe gone, by whom has it been removed and where has it merged ? It was just now seen by me, and has it really ceased to exist ? It is indeed strange !" Again, when he comes down from the domain of the noumenon, he perceives the world with all its diversity ; not as a reality but as a phenomenon having the Real as its background. By the vast majority of mankind, not blessed with the vision of the Truth, the world is, however, seen to be the only reality. Sankara—the synthetic philosopher—takes note of all these three "visions" seen from three different standpoints. If the world is real why does it cease to exist in the state of Samadhi ? If it is really non-existent why does it appear to be present in another state of consciousness ? Again, where does it come from ? And what is its basis ? Says the commentator—"This world with its manifold objects of enjoyment, enjoyer and so on has no existence apart from Brahman. By that element of plurality which is the fiction of nescience, which is characterised by name and form, which is not to be defined either as existing or non-existing, Brahman becomes the basis of this entire apparent world with its multifarious ; changes ; while in its true and real nature it remains unchanged at the same time, lifted above the phenomenal universe."

Nature of Maya.

The devotee calls the universe the *Leela* or the sport of the Lord. To put it in plain words, he does not know what it is. The Jnani again speaks of it as a product of Maya—the inscrutable power of the Lord. He too frankly acknowledges that he cannot comprehend its nature. The agnostic philosopher, Herbert Spencer, means much the same thing when he says—"We are obliged to regard every phenomenon as a manifestation of some Power by which we are acted upon....But the criticisms of science teach us that the power is incomprehensible." Indeed, the nature of this Power—the Divine Maya—is beyond human comprehension. Why and how does it produce a world so full of contradictions—of good and evil, happiness and misery, life and death? And why and how again, does it melt away with all its creation at the dawn of knowledge? None has been able to solve the mystery. But still there comes a time when it ceases to be, when the question of its existence or non-existence does not arise at all. As Sankara observes—"Maya is neither existent nor non-existent, nor partakes of both characters. She is the most wonderful and cannot be described in words. She can be destroyed by the realisation of the pure Brahman, the One without a second, just as the mistaken idea of a snake is removed by the discrimination of the rope." Thus although we cannot know the nature of this illusive Maya, we can however transcend it. And beyond it, says Swami Vivekananda,

"There is but one,—the Free—the Knower—Self !
Without a name, without a form or stain.
In Him is Maya, dreaming all this dream.
The witness, He appears as nature, Soul."

Brahman—the Absolute Reality.

To Sankara, as it was to the Upanishadic seers, Advaita is an experience. As the result of the strictest ethical culture and spiritual practice, the aspirant

develops a new sense—the faculty of intuition latent in him. And with its help he sees the Truth as it is. Herbert Spencer is quite right when he says with Kant that nothing can be known in its ultimate nature, and that the Absolute Reality can never be perceived as It is, through the limitations of time, space and causation, which go to make up the structure of the mind—the chief instrument of empirical knowledge. But speculative philosophers know nothing of the higher faculties which reveal the glory of the Self, and which the Upanishads speak of in the clearest terms—"The All-pervading Purusha who is devoid of all distinctive marks, and knowing whom (every) one is emancipated and attains to immortality, can never be reached by speech nor even by the mind. He is revealed through intuition to the purified intellect." Like a clean mirror the purified intellect reflects the light of the Atman. But there is also a higher state "when the senses lie still with the mind, and even the intellect works not," when the individual is merged in the Universal which, according to Sankara, is "the Supreme Principle wherein there is no differentiation of knower, knowledge and known, and which is infinite, transcendent and the essence of Absolute Knowledge." To call this experience a void or negation, and to brand Sankara as a nihilist is to misunderstand him and his philosophy altogether. If he is a nihilist why does he take immense pains to refute the soulless philosophies of Buddhism or the atheistic system of the Sankhya? Why again should he be so very particular about proving that the one omnipresent Being underlies all phenomenal things, and that "Brahman alone is real, the world is unreal and the individual is no other than Brahman Itself?" The idea of "nothingness" does not enter into Sankara's conception of the Ultimate Reality. His denial of individuality and multiplicity is "a denial made on behalf of a deeper Yes."

Sankara and Practical Life.

Sankara is no dreaming idealist. He is a practical philosopher—one of the most compassionate world-teachers who “having themselves crossed this dreadful ocean of birth and death, help others also to cross the same without any selfish motive whatsoever.” If Sankara is very enthusiastic about speaking of the One without a second, he is also anxious to help others to realise It through the necessary spiritual culture. Superficial critics when they accuse Sankara of teaching anybody and everybody the “baneful” doctrine of the identity of soul with God, fail to note that the great philosopher is not prepared to allow a person to inquire into the mysteries of Brahman and follow the practice of Advaita, unless he has qualified himself for it by previously passing through a rigorous ethical and mental training. Like a true teacher he comes down to the mental plane of the student who believes in the reality of the soul and the universe, and insists on his scrupulously following the path of duty. Says Sankara—“So long as a person has not reached the true knowledge of the unity of the Self, it does not enter his mind that the world is untrue. Hence there is no reason why the ordinary course of secular and religious activity should not go on undisturbed.” “If you think that works lead to bondage and must therefore be avoided, that is wrong.” “Works are means to knowledge ; hence one must exert oneself rigorously for these means.”

The Path of Worship

The highest knowledge may be attained not only through the path of Jnana or analysis and discrimination but also through the path of Bhakti or devotion. With the sages of the Upanishads Sankara fully recognises the utility of Upasana or worship. His own life is a remarkable blending of Jnana and Bhakti though both of these have the realisation of the Unity as their ultimate

goal. If as a philosopher he speaks of the Absolute of the Advaita Vedanta, as a devotee he believes in the necessity of worshipping Brahman in His personal aspect. Like his Jnana, his Bhakti is of a very refined kind. And according to him the goal of both of these is a complete merging of the individual in the Universal, of the worshipper in the Godhead. "Some say, 'Lord ! I am Thine.' Others say, 'I am Thyself.' In spite of this slight difference the goal of both is the same." With the vision of a mystic Sankara recognises the great psychological fact that man wants to take refuge in an Almighty Being who can save him from the troubles and tribulations of life. Even the agnostic recognises this fact when he cries out in despair, "O God, if there be a God, save my soul if I have a soul !"

Sankara's Conception of the Deity

Personal God is a spiritual necessity with almost all religious men. But even this is too high for the common people who can begin their religious life only with the worship of symbols. It was out of this consideration that Sankara introduced Panchopasana or the worship of the five chief gods of popular Hinduism,—Siva, Sakti, Vishnu, Ganapati and Surya which, however, he looked upon as different phases of the same Godhead. Unlike the sectarian teachers, Sankara did not institute the worship of a particular god or goddess to the exclusion of others. True to the spirit of the Upanishads which he followed with a greater devotion than any other commentator, he held that each form of worship, if conducted in right spirit, has the power to elevate man, purify his understanding, and enable him to follow higher and higher ideals and courses of spiritual practice until he attains the *summum bonum* of life. Endowed with a universal spirit and a synthetic mind, the great teacher of Advaita could not make any invidious distinction between one god and another, but saw the

same undivided and indivisible Absolute at the back of each. Of Siva he sings—"Salutation to Thee, O the All-pervading Being whose form is the universe! Salutation to Thee who art of the nature of Knowledge and Bliss! Salutation to Thee who art known by the highest knowledge revealed in the scriptures!" Addressing the Divine Mother he says, "Thou supportest all beings, visible and invisible. Thou art the source of the light of wisdom. Thou givest us the power to understand the truths of the scriptures. Thou art the opener of the panels of the door of liberation. O Thou the abode of mercy, grant me Thy mercy!" Again to Vishnu he prays—"O Vishnu remove my egoism, calm my mind, control my attachment for the sense-objects, expand my love for all beings and save me from the ocean of worldly existence! Just as the waves merge themselves in the ocean, and not the ocean in the waves, so, Oh Lord, when all distinctions are removed, it is I that lose myself in Thee, and never Thou in me." Thus the system of monism as propounded by Sankara is both philosophy and religion. And the great lesson that we learn from a study of the life and works of the illustrious teacher is, as Prof. MaxMuller holds, "that there can be nothing phenomenal without something that is real, and that goodness and virtue, faith and works, are necessary as a preparation, nay as a *sine qua non*, for the attainment of the highest knowledge which brings the soul back to its source and to its home, and restores it to its true nature, to its true Selfhood in Brahman."

CONCEPT OF THE SELF *

By Swami Sharvananda

Though the Rig-Veda often speaks of man's attaining to different heavens by offering worship and oblations to different gods, the theory of Atman as a pure intelligent Being is not found fully developed therein. The utmost we can find there is the belief in a super-physical entity surviving the disruption of the body after death. For example in Mandal I, 164, it is distinctly stated that there are two entities in man, two birds of golden plumage on the same tree, one enjoying its fruits and the other an unconcerned witness. In Mandal X, again, a young soul's journey to higher and still higher heavens through the prayers of relatives is recorded—an incident reminiscent of the later story of Nachiketas. Beyond this and similar ideas, we find in the Rig-Veda and other Vedic texts no clear mention of the Atman. But the Upanishads and the Aranyakas are replete with disquisitions on Its nature.

The first mention made of the individual soul, later known as Jivatman, is found in the *Chhandogya Upanishad* which, while dwelling on the story of creation and the will of the one Supreme Being to become the many, says, अनेन जीवेन आत्मना अनुप्रविश्य नामरूपे व्याकरवाणि । “Well, may I enter into creation by means of this Living Self (Jivatman) and shall appear under different names and forms.” The Jivatman is here considered essentially as a principle of intelligence and consciousness. Hence the earliest idea held about the Jivatman was as an intelligent entity, entirely separate from the corporeal body. Further, the ancient seers always made a clear distinction between the Atman and the mind, though it is difficult to-day to

* Notes of a lecture delivered in Mysore.

unravel the tangled thread of thought which caused this differentiation to arise. In the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* we find passages where the mind is called Atman and is said to see everything, to move all the senses and organs ; but even there, every statement clearly recognises the distinction between the mind and the Vijnana Atman (intelligent Self). The *Kena Upanishad* declares : " That which the mind cannot comprehend, know That as Atman." And the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, again, while noting the Antaryamitwa (immanence) of the Atman, emphasises that It controls the Manas (mind) though the Manas does not know It.

How did the Upanishadic seers avoid a confusion which has perplexed and misled many a modern thinker of the West ? The main reason, of course, was that they discovered the higher truths about the inner reality of man, not so much through intellectual effort as through introspection and intuition. By this process they easily felt that the Manas was as much a material object as the body, and hence not of the same stuff as the Atman. Again, the perception of changes produced in the mind by age or disease convinced them that the mind belonged to the domain of creation and was therefore distinct from the Self. The condition of man during deep sleep when the mind ceases to function, although the Jiva continues to exist, also considerably helped them in arriving at the true conception of the Atman.

The *Katha Upanishad* speaks of the Jivatman as being united with all the different senses, the mind and the body. It is, no doubt, the Bhokta or enjoyer and also the Karta or doer of actions. But it is also distinctly affirmed that these aspects are quite different from It, being created by It for Its activity and enjoyed by It through the traditional nineteen instruments including the sensory and the motor organs, the volitional and intellectual faculties of the mind, memory and the ego.

Again, the Jiva is conceived of as having five Kosas (Sheaths) enumerated in regular order in the *Taittiriya Upanishad*. It is also elsewhere said to possess three kinds of Sarira or body—gross, subtle and causal. And in the *Mandukya Upanishad* it is clearly and definitely mentioned that the Jiva passes through three states of consciousness. The Jiva is therein called Vaisvanara during the awakened state, and is described as Bahi-Prajna, i. e., having the consciousness of the external world. In the Swapna (dream) state the Jiva is called Taijasa, formed of light—and also Antah-Prajna, having the consciousness of its internal impressions only, from which it creates various objects for its enjoyment. In Sushupti or deep sleep, the Upanishad calls the Jiva, Prajna; for there remains nothing except a flicker of knowledge. While formerly there were awareness and things to be aware of, now all this multiplicity has disappeared. The Jiva exists "in the form of bliss only" without creation or enjoyment, without change, individuality or differentiation, and verily it goes back to itself: स्वहिं अर्पितो भवति ।

The philosophers of India took into consideration the experiences of men in these three states of consciousness, which they accepted as true fundamentals. They also recognised a state where all concepts of external existence, of space and time were negated, and the consciousness of the Real alone dwelt. This is called the Turiya (lit. fourth) state where Chaitanya remains in itself. Consciousness is not a satisfactory synonym for Chaitanya; for the English word includes the concept of awareness, which implies something to be aware of. But Chaitanya is the pure principle of intelligence, apart from the faculty of mind or intellect. The *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* says: आत्मन्येवात्मानं पश्यति—In the Turiya state the Atman realises its true nature which is Intelligence Itself.

Among the Indian philosophers there are different conceptions about the relationship between the Jiva or the individual soul and Iswara, the Supreme Soul. Some say that after creation, both remain separate, the difference being regarded by one party as Swajatiya (as between the members of the same species) and by another as Vijatiya (as between the members of different species). To others, again, both belong to the same organism, the difference being one of Swagatha (as between Anu and Vibhu—parts and whole). All souls are but different members of the same Cosmic Entity. Jiva and Jagat (world) are the qualities of God. And finally others assert that both the Jiva and Iswara are essentially the same, however distinct the appearances may be. Many passages for supporting all these theories can be easily found in the Upanishads. The Dualists have the illustration of the two birds with golden plumage though the birds are very probably meant by the context to be Antahkarana (internal organ) and the Jiva. In the *Katha Upanishad* the expression *Chhayatapayoriva* (like shade and light) is used to exemplify the relation thus supporting the *Pratibimbavadins* who maintain that the Jiva is a reflection of Iswara. The Visishtadwaitic conception of the Jiva as a part of Iswara is suggested by the idea of Antaryyamin—the Spirit immanent in the Jiva and Jagat, which are regarded as the body of God. But no passages can be met with in the whole field of the Upanishadic literature, which support the theory that in the Paramarthika state, in the Turiya level of consciousness, Iswara is distinct from the Jiva. On the other hand, there are numerous positive statements of unity : सोऽहमस्मि (I am He) ; अहमिदं ब्रह्मैव भवति (Verily, the knower of Brahman becomes Brahman Itself) ; तत्त्वमसि (Thou art That) ; नेति नेति आत्मा (Not this, not this is the Atman) ; सदेव इदमग्र आसीदेकमेवाद्वितीयं (Verily, in the beginning this one Being alone

existed without a second). The many-ness is only an appearance ; and the Jiva is no other than Iswara.

All this variety of arguments and view-points are found in the Upanishads, since they are the records of the spiritual thoughts and experiences of several ages and sages. They represent but different angles of vision and levels of experience. They can all be easily reconciled as but distinct stages in a gradual evolution of the Spirit towards One Infinity. Differences are inevitable and even necessary in the *Vyavaharika* stages of struggle, but in the *Paramarthika* level of consciousness, the Upanishads have declared the doctrine of Tattvamasi (Thou art That) in a most uncontroversial and unimpeachable manner. After all, as Mahavira said, in the physical plane of consciousness, we are all Upasakas, the servants of God ; in the psychic state we feel as parts of the Lord, and in the heights of spiritual realisation, we all become one with Him who is the soul of all beings, who though One appears as the many.

MYSTICISM.

By T. S. Avinashilingam, B.A., B.L.

Mysticism is a word very difficult to define. It has been described by an English author as 'one of the most abused words in the English language,' 'used in different and mutually exclusive senses by Religion, Poetry and Philosophy' and 'claimed as an excuse for every kind of occultism, for dilute transcendentalism, vapid symbolism, religious and aesthetic sentimentality and bad metaphysics,' while in reality 'it is the expression of the innate tendency of the human spirit towards complete harmony with the transcendental order.'

In the popular mind, mysticism has always been associated with magic, producing in its initiates powers unknown to ordinary men. Its association with magic has given it a bad odour ; and this mistaking one for the other is nothing to be wondered at, as a study of both shows that all through they have used the same language, instruments and methods. Hence it is that so much of

what is real magic is described popularly as mysticism. While one set of people class it with the miraculous, another set, the so-called scientists look upon it as nothing more than a state of self-induced sleep or hypnotic trance.

No doubt the highest mystical experience and the deep sleep state have something in common in outward appearance. In both the states, the body loses all consciousness of the external world and the mind is turned inward. But we must remember this great truth of nature, that extremes look very much alike. When there is no light, nothing is visible to us ; and when there is too much of light, then also nothing is seen. When we are stationary and when we are moving at a very high speed, in both cases, we have the same feeling of stillness. In the same way, Samadhi and sleep being at extreme ends of consciousness, look very much alike. While the former is the manifestation of the highest Satva, the latter is the effect of the deepest Tamas. In Samadhi, the mind in its activity loses itself in the ideal ; in sleep the mind is suppressed without any activity ; one is a state of bliss and the other, a state of ignorance. As the Swami Vivekananda tersely puts it, "a fool enters into Samadhi and comes out a sage ; whereas from sleep he returns a fool as before."

As for the resemblance between the mystic state and the hypnotic trance, it is most superficial. They are different in their origin, experience and consequence. The mystic experience is the result of concentrated effort at attaining to a particular plane of consciousness, and is followed by experiences of that consciousness. It is not a blank or a void but an ineffable bliss that is felt in that state. On the other hand, hypnotism is the result of a weak mind yielding to the superimposition of the will of a stronger personality. The man under a hypnotic trance does not experience anything definite. He comes out of it forgetful of all that happened while the trance lasted. Only he feels weaker than before. Karl Kellsur, a great European scholar, writes after a deep study and careful observation: "Through the mastery that the yogi (mystic) attains over his thoughts and his body, he grows into a character ; by the subjection of his impulses and propensities to his will, he becomes a 'personality' hard to be influenced by others, and thus almost the opposite of what we usually understand by the words 'medium' or 'psychic object.'"

Thus it is clear that true mysticism is not the working of an abnormal mind or a diseased brain. It represents, on the other

hand, the climax of human consciousness wherein all problems are solved, and where doubts give place to conviction, darkness to light, and misery to bliss. In its pure form, it is the science of the Ultimate, 'the science of union with the Absolute'. And the true mystic is one who attains to this union, not the one who merely talks about it.

Looking about us, we find that diversity is the law of nature. In the animal world, in the vegetable world and in the mineral world, what varieties prevail ! And in the human kind how many classes, how many groups, how many grades ! Some are too lazy even to enjoy their senses, while others are solely engrossed in them. Some are devoted to intellectual pursuits while there exist as the very salt of the earth a few who deny themselves the world that they may find the Reality behind the all. This last class of people are not satisfied with the work-a-day world, the world of sense perceptions. They are tormented by the unknowable ; they ache for the first principles and demand a background to the shadow-show of things. Nor are they satisfied with the world of the objective idealist, however sublime may be his universe of ideas reflecting the 'dream of its creator.' They surrender themselves in absolute love to the One behind the all and press forward through thick and thin seeking 'union with the beloved object.' Thus the mystic always lives at a level of experience different from that of ordinary people. To such a man, philosophy becomes a statement of facts actually perceived through an illumined consciousness. Ethics and metaphysics which to the common man are merely academical and intellectual are to him a great motive power for the awakening of the spiritual faculties. His experiences are not hallucinations of the mind or the intellect ; on the other hand, 'it is a seeing, a hearing, a touching, a tasting, in fact a complete consciousness of reality.' Truth appears to him 'not in the subjectivity of a highly developed intellectualism only: it objectifies itself in his intense search for truth.' To him truth is as much a reality as the physical world seems to us. The fact that it is beyond the reach of the ordinary mind is put forward generally as an argument against the veracity of the mystic insight.

To-day we are progressing by leaps and bounds in the world of science. Should we deny the great truths discovered by Dr. Bose or Einstein simply because they cannot be perceived by our unrefined senses, or even while aided by the ordinary instruments for sense perception ? Just as the masters of science have devel-

oped, ultra-sensitive instruments for probing into the world of sense, a Kabir or a Christ perfected the methods of attaining to a supersensuous vision. They were not content to be passive or theoretical, but they were intensely active and practical. It was not with them a mere running after supersensible knowledge. They realised the Highest Bliss being non-individualistic; they advanced with a firm faith in a loving God, and a personal self capable of communion with Him. Their glimpse of the Reality gave for them a complete system of life. Their aims were wholly transcendental and spiritual. They drew their whole being onward, always under the guidance of the heart. They attained to a state of union with the One, 'not merely as an attitude of the mind and heart but as a form of organic life.' They ask you whether you have the proper faith, strength and steadfastness to struggle on towards the goal undauntedly. If you have these traits, surely, you also can attain to the height of their vision.

Their experiences are not unique; they form the common stock of all mystics at all times and places. They have contributed not a little to the advancement of true civilisation and to the progress of the moral and religious ideas of the world. In spite of the differences of race, language and climate, we find a golden thread of unity running through the experiences of all these great men. Whether we look at the Rishis of Bharatavarsha or the Medieval Saints of Europe or the Sufis of ancient Persia, their teachings are in essence the same, as Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna put it, 'even as all jackals make the same cry'.

A study of the lives of these great men reveals certain distinguishing traits which mark them out from others. We note that their knowledge is not of this world, i.e., of the body and the senses. They raise themselves by a resolute, persistent and almost super-human effort to a plane of intuitive knowledge and enlightenment. They elevate their mind by a process of constant and concentrated meditation to states, normally inconceivable, where the soul unfolds its immense possibilities. Advancing further, they come face to face with the innermost reality. The mightiest objective things are lost in the final consciousness, where 'man stands in the borderland of reality, gazing across the shoreless ocean of the Soul. The immediate consequence of such an experience is an inexpressible joy. The seers of the Upanishads declare again and again the same idea :—

यता वाचो निवर्तते । अप्राप्य मनसा सह ।

आमन्दं ब्रह्मणो विद्वान् । न विभेति कदाचनेति ॥

'He fears not at any time who knows that bliss of Brahman without reaching which speech turns back with the mind.'

The Christian mystics like Saint Teresa declare that such joy is beyond thought or speech and the Sufis echo the same experience. In that joy, the enjoyer loses his personality and in the intensity of the beatific vision, the body and the senses are forgotten. As a consequence, the mystic begins to see things in a new light. To them, objects of the material world lose their charm. He sees the vanity of all earthly possessions, and is no longer enamoured of the pleasures the senses can afford. Women and wealth, name and fame cease to attract him. Recognising the impermanence and unreality of this world he is no more attached to them. He directs his whole life towards the Eternal and Only Reality.

Now it may be asked, "What is the result of all mystic thought?" It brings about, says the mystic, the realisation of the transcendental unity of the universe. As the mystic evolves into higher and higher states of consciousness, he sees more and more clearly the true nature of things. Purified and ennobled by Shraddha (faith), Viveka (discrimination) and Vairagya (dispassion), he perceives the realities of life. The average mystic looks upon and worships the ideal as something outside his own self. But the most exalted ones, those blessed with the illumination of final realisation, transcend this idea of objective form. They lose their personality and become one with the Supreme Spirit. Thus it was that the great Rishis declared *Tat twam asi* (Thou art That); *Aham Brahmasmi* (I am Brahman); and *Sitoham* (I am Siva). It was with the same significance that Christ spoke, when he said, 'I and my Father are one'; and the Sufi mystic Mansur of the 10th century exclaimed 'I am the Truth.' Saints have again and again tried to describe thus the Indescribable.

'Quelling all doubts and misgivings, stopping the oscillations of the mind, exhausting the momentum of past action; stilling the body, calming the mind and drowning the ego, descends the sweet joy of Brahman in that superconscious state. Space disappears into nothingness, time is swallowed into eternity and tremendous bursting of effulgence annihilates the oppressive darkness of sense and thought. The world with its myriad bodies melts away—even thought is hushed into silence—and only Existence is.'

THE APOCALYPSE UNVEILED³

By Swami Prabhavananda

Before we begin the actual study of this, the most mystical of the books of the Bible, a few words regarding Jesus the Christ spoken of there, will not be out of place. The writer of the book as well as the writer of the Gospel of St. John, has identified Jesus Christ with the Logos—the Word—or the Son of God.

What is this Logos? "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."† Thus this Word is one with God. Philip of Alexandria, a Jewish thinker, has defined the word "Logos" as the "perfect type" of expression in the mind of God. According to Plato, before Creation, the perfect type of everything was in the mind of God. The Universe was the outer and visible expression of God. Before man was created, the first expression (or thought), the 'ideal man' was in the mind of the Creator. This 'thought' was the Logos, the only begotten Son of God.

The *Word* or Son of God, which has been identified with Jesus Christ (for in Him has that perfect type been expressed) stands for the Higher Self, or what is called in Vedanta, the Divine Spirit. This Higher Self is allegorically said to be dead and then restored to life. Jesus Christ is said to be dead, then resurrected. When the Spirit is encased in the sheaths of ignorance—physical, subtle and causal—and is identified with these, it is said to be dead; but when the knowledge of its true nature is gained, it is resurrected—becomes alive. Plato has expressed this idea thus: "Some say that the body is the tomb of the soul, which may be considered as buried in our present life." We also find the same idea in the prologue of the book: "Behold he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all

* At the earnest request of some students of the Vedanta Society of Portland Oregon, U. S. A., to explain the Christian Bible, the Swami has taken up "The Revelation of St. John the Divine"—the last and the most misunderstood book of the New Testament—for his Thursday meditation class. His interpretation of the "Revelation" the Greek word for which is *Apocalypse*, has created a keen interest among the students, and will, we hope, be of interest to our readers. The introduction appeared in our issue of April, 1927.

Ed. V. K.

† John, i: 1.

kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him." * The "clouds" referred to here are the Auric forces. The "eye" which shall see him, is the noetic center—the intuitive mind—; "they" which pierced him are the sense perceptions and "all kindreds of the earth shall wail" because they will no longer have any power over him.

In the following verse of the book, we find it plainly stated that God alone exists. He *alone* is the Truth. †

John—who represents the re-incarnating self or the individualized spirit (man)—has first to stay on the Island of Patmos before he receives initiation into the higher mysteries. ‡

The searcher of the Truth must be alone before any vision or revelation can come to him. Above all he desires solitude. In the yearning for the Highest, all desire for the pleasures of the senses leaves him, as does also the inner higher bliss; for the time, life becomes dry and barren . . . hence "Island"—isolation.

"I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great Voice as of a trumpet." §

When through the practice of deep meditation one attains to the state which is known in Yoga as *Kumbhak* (when the breath is suspended altogether), the first spiritual vision opens up. In this state, or Spirit, John saw: "one like unto the Son of man," and describes His features. This is the vision of John's own spiritual body (Sukshma Sarira). As the vision unfolds, John hears this Man (his own self) sending messages to "seven churches which are in Asia." ¶ What are the seven churches in Asia? Taken literally as seven churches existing in different cities of Asia, the messages are meaningless and purposeless.

The seven churches are said to be in Asia. Asia is the native land of John and therefore represents the body—the homeland of the soul. The Greek word *ekklesia*—church—meaning an assembly or group of people, applies in the allegory to the nervous plexus or ganglion, which are seven in number. The seven stars (planets)

* Rev. 1: 7.

† Ibid. 1: 9.

‡ Ibid. 1: 10.

§ Ibid. 1: 8.

¶ Ibid. 1: 11.

are the chief divinities—Mikael, Gabriel, etc.—representing the seven aspects of the Logos. * The 'seven churches' (groups), named for seven Asian cities, each noted for some particular characteristic, fits in exactly in the allegory with the seven *Chakras* or centers in the body. Now for the first time comes the knowledge that these centers have to be conquered in order that the soul may win to the Highest.

These centers or *Chakras* in the body are :—(1) *Muladhar*—Sacral ganglion—Ephesus, a city celebrated for its great temple of Diana, the "many-breasted Mother". The *Kundalini* or the *Spetrema* (the regenerative force) which is also spoken as Divine Mother in Hindu symbology, resides in that center of the body. (2) *Swadhisthan*—Prostatic ganglion—Smyrna noted for its figs. The Fig is a phallic symbol. (3) *Manipur*—Epigastric ganglion (solar plexus)—Pergamos, noted for its temple of Aesculapius, to which the people resorted for the healing of the diseases of the body. This particular center, the solar plexus is the seat of the psychic force used in all sorts of mental or psychic healing. (4) *Anahata*—Cardiac ganglion—Thyatira, a city celebrated for the manufacture of scarlet dyes—(allegorically suggesting the blood and the circulatory system in the heart). (5) *Vishuddha*—Laryngeal ganglion—Sardis—a name which suggests a flesh-coloured stone. The Allegory refers undoubtedly to the center in the throat—aluding to the laryngeal protuberance. (6) *Ajna*—Canvernous ganglion—Philadelphia, this city is repeatedly destroyed by earthquakes. Reference is here made to the sixth center. When the *Kundalini* rises to that center, the whole earth shakes, as it were—the world—consciousness vanishes. (7) *Sahasrara*—Conarium or Pineal ganglion—Laodica, a city noted for its "Phrygian powder" which is said to be a remedy for all sore or weak eyes. When the *Kundalini* rises to that center in the brain, there is full illumination and supreme wisdom. The third eye of knowledge is healed or restored to sight.

(To be continued)

SARADAMANI DEVI *

By Ramananda Chatterjee

The Hindu scriptures praise both householders and monks ; and they justly hold that the life of the householders is the basis of the other orders of life. It is not that either all monks or all householders should be praised or blamed. It is the God-given powers and tendencies of the mind that determine the kind of life God wants a man to lead and the works He wills him to accomplish. One's satisfaction or dissatisfaction arises from the consideration whether he is living up or not to the ideal of the life he has chosen for himself. We cannot judge a man's worth or success by the mere name or form of his life or the relative superiority of the life of the householder or the monk without reference to the individuals that live those lives.

It is generally found that the Sannyasins are either not married at all, or if married, they sever all relations with their wives, renounce them and leave their homes. Paramahansa Ramakrishna was a Sannyasin, but he married at the age of twenty-four.† His marriage did not take place when he had not arrived at the age of discretion or against his will. In fact it had his full approval, and it is recorded in his life that the choice of his bride was made under his own guidance. It is true that he did not live with her like an ordinary householder and in any physical relations ; but neither did he forsake her, but rather kept her near him and made her his true help-mate by affectionate instructions and personal example. This is one of the specialities of Ramakrishna's life.

But Ramakrishna alone was not unique. His wife Saradamani Devi also shared this quality. May be that Ramakrishna himself taught and trained her, but the pupil also must have had the capacity to assimilate and avail herself of the teaching. All pupils of the same teacher do not turn out good and wise; we cannot make as fine ornaments of a lump of clay as of gold.

* Better known as the "Holy Mother" to the followers of Sri Ramakrishna. The article is abridged from the *Modern Review* for June, 1927. It is a translation of a Bengali article.

Ed., V. K.

† Of course years before his initiation into the monastic life.

Ed. V. K.

The lay name of Ramakrishna was Gadadhar. "His affectionate mother and elder brother decided to have him married to a suitable bride, hoping to cure him thereby of his extreme indifference to the world and constant mental unsettlement." "They held their council in secret ; for they feared that if Gadadhar came to know of their decision, he was sure to protest against it. But the intelligent Gadadhar found it out in no time. He did not, however, raise any objection. He rather took it as great fun, like a child enjoying a festival."

Messengers were sent about to find a suitable bride, but they returned disappointed. It was then that Gadadhar suggested the daughter of Ramchandra Mukherji of Jayrambati in the Bankura District. His mother and brother sent a man to inquire who brought hopeful news, and soon all negotiations were over.

Accordingly in the latter part of the month of Baishakh of the Bengali year 1266, Gadadhar duly married the five-year-old daughter of Ramchandra Mukherji. Gadadhar had by then completed his twenty-third year and stepped into the twenty-fourth.

Saradamani Devi had seen her husband but once after her marriage, when she was in her seventh year. About six years after that, when she was thirteen years old, she was taken to her husband's house at Kamarpukur, where she stayed for a month. But Ramakrishna was then living at Dakshineswar and she could not meet him. She lived for another six weeks at Kamarpukur about six months later. But then also she did not see her husband. And then, three or four months after, the word came that Ramakrishna had come home and she had been sent for. She was now thirteen years and six or seven months old.

Ramakrishna now set himself to the fulfilment of a noble duty. He did not care whether his wife came to him or not. But when she did come to Kamarpukur he engaged himself earnestly in her education and welfare. "His great teacher, Tota Puri, knowing him to be married, had said, 'It does not matter. He alone is truly established in *Brahman*, whose dispassion, discrimination and wisdom are not in any way impaired even in the company of his wife. He alone has attained true knowledge of *Brahman*, who can look on

* All passages in this article which are within marks of quotation are taken from the Bengali book named *Ramakrishna-Iti-prasanga*

men and women with the same eye, perceiving them as identical with the *Atman* (the Soul) and behave with them accordingly. Those who make a distinction between men and women are far from the perfect knowledge of *Brahman* though aspirants to it they may be."

These words of Tota Puri now came back to Ramakrishna's mind and led him to put his long-acquired spiritual knowledge to the test and devote himself to the well-being of his wife. Whenever he felt anything to be his duty, he could not neglect it or leave it half-finished. In the present instance also he did not act otherwise. "When he resolved to educate his young wife, he did not do it in half measures. He saw to it from the first that she attained skill in the service of God, Guru (spiritual preceptor) and guests and in the works of the household and learnt the proper use of money. He taught her above all to live in absolute self-surrender to the Lord and behave correctly with all persons under all circumstances and in all conditions and stations of life."

The pure-hearted girl felt an indescribable joy in living in the divine company of Ramakrishna and being blessed with his self-less love and care. In later days, she often spoke of this great happiness to the women disciples of her husband. "Since then," she would say, "I always felt as if a pitcher filled with bliss had been installed in my heart. I cannot tell you how full I felt of that calm, steady and divine joy."

A few months later Ramakrishna went back to Dakshineswar. Saradamani also returned to her father, intensively conscious of having found a supreme endless happiness.

"The great lasting joy with which her first acquaintance with her godly husband had endowed her, kept her above the joys and sorrows of her daily life; but the world did not allow its flow unimpededly. For often the villagers would refer to her husband as a mad man, as one who roved about nude, crying out the names of God, and the village woman pitied and despised her as the wife of a lunatic. These though she endured them silently, went deep into her heart. Was he really so changed from what she had seen him? Had he really become what he was reported to be? Thus would she think and conclude that if the reports were true, then her place should not be in her father's house but by his side to serve and nurse him. After long and careful thought, she resolved to go personally to Dakshineswar to see him with her own eyes and act as circumstances required."

Some of her distant women relatives had decided that year to go to Calcutta for bathing in the holy Ganges. She now proposed to accompany them. When they asked her father for permission, he came to understand the reason for her intended visit and arranged to take her himself to Calcutta. It was not possible to reach Calcutta by railway from Jayrambati. She had either to walk or to travel in a palanquin but the rich only could avail themselves of the latter means. Therefore Ramchandra Mukherji started on foot with his daughter and party. "Saradamani, unused to such rough journeys on foot, fell ill of severe fever on the way and caused much anxiety to her father. He found further progress impossible and took shelter in a way-side rest house."

In the morning, however, Ramchandra found her completely free of fever and thought it best to proceed slowly, instead of waiting helplessly in the rest-house. She also agreed with her father. They fortunately came across a palanquin before they had proceeded far and engaged it. That day also she had fever, but it was comparatively mild. She bore it easily, and did not speak of it to any one. The same night at nine the party reached Dakshineswar.

Seeing her arrive so ill, Ramakrishna became very anxious. "He arranged for a separate bed for her in his own room, lest she should catch cold elsewhere. She was cured completely in three or four days by proper treatment and nursing."

All these days Ramakrishna kept her in his own room and himself supervised her treatment and diet; and when she recovered, he arranged for her stay with his mother in the *nahavut**. Saradamani saw that Ramakrishna was the same as before and his love and affection for her had not changed. A great joy filled her heart and she devoted herself to the service of her husband and his mother. Her father went home after a few days rejoicing at the happiness of his daughter.

Ramakrishna also devoted his attention to the discharge of his duties to his wife, and availed himself of his leisure hours to instruct her on the end and aim of human life and its duties. His training did not end in verbal instruction. His method was to keep the pupil by his side and completely master his heart with his great love. He would then give him instruction and keep a keen and constant

* A small room, at some distance from the temple enclosure, intended for the temple music.

watch over him to see how far he was carrying those instructions into practice, and would correct him whenever he found him going wrong. He followed the same method with Saradamani. Ramakrishna was so careful about even trifling details that he said to his wife, 'When you get into a carriage or boat, get in first. But when you get down, get down last after seeing if anything is left behind.'

It is said that one day while shampooing her husband's feet, she asked him, "Who do you think I am?" To which Ramakrishna replied, "The Mother who is in the shrine gave birth to this body and is now living in the *nahavat*; even she is now shampooing my feet. Really, I tell you, I find you an embodiment of the Divine Mother Herself." Ramakrishna found in all women—even the most corrupt, the presence of the Mother of the universe.

"The Rishi of the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* thus teaches in the discourse on Yajnavalkya and Maitreyi: "Because the Divine Self is in the husband, therefore does the wife love her husband; and because the Divine Self is in the wife, therefore does the husband love the wife."

During this time Ramakrishna and Saradamani used to sleep in the same bed. Ramakrishna had no consciousness of the body, spent almost the whole night absorbed in *Samadhi*. From what Ramakrishna said of those days it is clear that if Saradamani also had not been completely free from all desires, he would not have so completely escaped the taint of body-consciousness. It is doubtful if, without the noble and pure character of his wife, Ramakrishna would have reached the height of spiritual realisation that he did though it may be she appears even now rather like a shadowy figure behind the effulgent personality of her husband.

Thus passed more than a year. Ramakrishna found that his mind was not assailed by even a moment's consciousness of physical appetite and could not look upon and think of Saradamani as other than a fragment of the Mother of the universe or different from the *Atman* or *Brahman*. He felt that he had passed through the ordeal unscathed. He, therefore, arranged for the performance of the *Shodasi Puja** and worshipped Saradamani with due rites and ceremonies. It is said that during the later part of the worship she lost external consciousness and went into *Samadhi*.

* The worship of a young woman as the very embodiment of the Divine Mother.

But this did not make her proud or turn her head.

She spent nearly five months at Dakshineswar after the *Shodasi Puja*, during which she would, as usual, serve Ramakrishna and his mother and his guests by preparing their meals and doing other household duties. In those days Ramakrishna "used to be in constant *Samadhi* throughout day and night" and "signs of death would sometimes be manifest on his person" and Saradamani could scarcely sleep at night for fear of his going into *Samadhi*. When Ramakrishna came to know of it, he arranged for her sleep with his mother in the *nahanat*. After such a life of sixteen months she returned to Kamarpukur in the month of Kartik of 1280.

Saradamani Devi, being a Bengali Hindu wife, was naturally very bashful. She spent many months in constant attendance on her husband and his guests, but very few ever saw her. She would leave her bed at three, before day-break, long before any one was about, and return to her room after finishing her bath and other morning duties and would not come out of it during the whole day. She would finish all work silently and with extraordinary quickness long before others had risen, and engage herself in worship and meditation. It was marvellous to see how in spite of her habits and nature, she spent days in dutifully serving her husband in spite of all personal discomforts in an one storeyed house in Shampukur, crowded by strangers, where he lived for sometime undergoing treatment for cancer. "As soon as she learnt that his disease might be aggravated for want of a suitable person to prepare necessary diet for him, she hastened with a glad heart to take up the charge without the least thought of her personal comfort. It was she who bore the brunt of the responsibility of nursing him."

Ramakrishna passed away on the 13th Shravan, 1293. Saradamani was thirty three years old. I had heard that she did not put on the weeds of a widow on the death of her husband. In order to ascertain the truth of it, I wrote to a disciple of Ramakrishna and Saradamani. I received the following reply :

"When after the passing of Sri Ramakrishna she was about to remove the bangles from her wrists, Sri Ramakrishna revealed himself to her in the healthy appearance of his early days, and holding her hand, said, 'Am I dead that you are removing the signs of wifehood?' After that she never bared her wrists. She

always put on a cloth with a thin red border and bangles on her hands" *

If all had this faith in the immortality of the soul, the world would be relieved of much of its misery, sin and suffering.

She lived for thirty-four years after her husband's passing. She herself passed away in her sixty-seventh year on the 4th of Shravan, 1327. The Bengali monthly *Udbodhan* of the next month celebrated her austerities, renunciation, steadfast faith, self-control, universal love and service, tireless activity, complete indifference to personal comforts, simplicity, humility, patience, kindness, forgiveness, sympathy, selflessness and other great qualities. The followers of her husband and herself used to call her Mother and even now refer to her as such. May the significance of this name be fulfilled in every way.

THE IDEA OF PROGRESS IN INDIA

(A REVIEW)

By Principal Kamakhya Nath Mitra. M.A.

The *Hindu* of Madras in its issue of the 20th May has reproduced an article from the *Nineteenth Century and After* contributed by Mr. John S. Hoyland under the title "The Idea of Progress in India." The present writer read the article in the *Nineteenth Century and After* as soon as the English mail arrived but did not think it necessary to take serious notice of it. But now that the *Hindu* has given it such wide publicity a few words must be said by way of criticism. Mr. Hoyland is an educationist and a missionary of Nagpur and is also an apostle of the cult of infinite progress which according to him is the special feature of Platonism and Christianity. The culture of India, in his opinion, is lamentably lacking in the idea of progress and that, he asserts, accounts for her stagnation through centuries. The idea of progress, he thinks, must be transmitted to India through education if India is to rise once more in the scale of nations. The motive power, he believes, must come from the West. We are thankful to Mr. Hoyland for his solicitude for our welfare and we would gladly have accepted his suggestion if it could be proved that the idea of progress, as he

* Bengali Hindu widows wear only a white piece of cloth without any coloured border. They do not wear any jewelry.

understands it, is supported by history and is scientifically sound. Unfortunately, however, his thesis is not well supported by arguments.

The present writer associates himself with the smart comments of the editor of the *Hindu* and proceeds to offer a few observations of his own.

To begin with, it must be said that there is nothing original in Mr. Hoyland's estimate of the civilisation of India. It is difficult to name the first man who laid down the dogma that the differentia between the East and the West is the idea of progress but the conjecture might be hazarded that it is Sir Henry Maine who before all clearly divided societies into progressive and stationary in his famous book *The Ancient Law*. According to him European societies are progressive and Asiatic societies, stationary. Sir Henry Maine was a profound scholar no doubt but his knowledge of the history of the East cannot be said to have been deeper than that of Professor Rhys Davids who in the closing pages of his *Buddhist India* refutes such arbitrary distinction and emphatically pronounces the opinion based on unimpeachable data that so far as India at least is concerned she has always moved like the countries of the West. Like the countries of the West her movement has been sometimes rapid and sometimes slow. It is also true that like Europe she has had her periods of stagnation and decay. The great fallacy of most Western scholars is to judge India by these periods alone. We might as well say that the West is stationary and even retrogressive by confining ourselves to the pages of Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*.

The Unchanging East! The Immoveable East! We are tired of these parrot-cries. History gives the lie to these cheap generalisations. But, then, we refuse to believe in the theory of absolute progress. Our philosophy and scriptures teach us that the movement of the world is curvilinear, that the world moves in cycles—and we are convinced that both science and history support this teachings of our sages. The idea of infinite rectilinear progress is scientifically untenable. Huxley's conception of evolution is in favour of our contention. Nor does history lend support to the idea. It is a false philosophy of history that tells us that there is progress *ad infinitum*.

The most illiterate Hindu is imbued with the idea of movement which includes the idea of progress and his idea is more rational than that of Mr. Hoyland. He believes that the wheel

will come full circle in course of time. He believes that after *Kali Yuga* will come *Satya Yuga* again. He believes that Lord Sree Krishna will descend not once but over and over again to establish the kingdom of *Dharma* and destroy all wrong-doers whoever they may be. From the point of view of India, as she is to-day, this idea of progress has more pragmatic value than that taught by many philosophers of the West.

It is not possible within the compass of a brief article to review the Western philosophy of history from Vico downwards; but of one thing we are convinced and it is this --that the idea of progress in the modern Western sense is neither Platonic nor Christian as Mr. Hoyland would have us believe, for according to Plato the movement of the world is cyclical and early Christians daily expected the end of the world. Our idea of saving India is entirely different from Mr. Hoyland's Christian-Platonic scheme of education. We are Vedantists. We know something about Plato and Christianity too, and we believe that ours is the last word of philosophy and religion. If India is to be saved at all it must be through the message of practical Vedanta, boldly delivered by Swami Vivekananda to the proudest peoples of the West intoxicated with the exuberance of a mischievous imperialism and material prosperity acquired at the expense of the East. We have fallen no doubt in the scale of nations but the meaning of the so-called Christian civilisation is 'not unknown to us. Very well do we know what a shocking veneer it is. We reject it emphatically and mean to save ourselves. Hands off!

But does Christian Platonism really teach that idea of progress by which the modern Westerner so vehemently swears? The present writer has already said that it does not and let him support his statement by quoting the authority of the best representative of Christian Platonism in England to-day. The name of Dean Inge is universally known. He has written an arresting dissertation on the Idea of Progress incorporated in his famous book *Outspoken Essays*. Whoever has read it must be well acquainted with the views propounded by the learned Dean. According to him neither Platonism nor Christianity is responsible for the so-called idea of Progress which is the working creed of Modern Europe. It is the off-spring of this-worldly outlook and he traces its descent to three persons mainly, viz., Hegel, Comte and Darwin. According to him it has degraded Christianity, for Protestantism has allied itself with Hegelianism, Darwinism and Comtism. The Roman

Catholics in this particular, he holds, are wiser than the Protestants. Dean Inge, the leading Christian Platonist of England, is a believer in curvilinear movement. He knows that the kingdom of Christ is not of this earth but that is no reason why Christian Endeavour should cease. What does Mr. Hoyland, a Christian missionary, say to all this? Does not his Master say: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God."

The so-called idea of progress, the doctrine of evolution, does not affect in the least our conception of *Moksha*. It does not in the least affect the Endeavour of the Hindu so well known as *nishkāma karma* (selfless work). *Atmano mokṣartham Jagaddhitaya cha*—For our own freedom and also for the good of the world—such is our motto. We, Hindus, are by no means going to lower our standard. We are never going to imitate the Protestants and alter our outlook.

The West talks so much of progress—but what is the meaning of progress? Is not moral progress the essence of progress? Now, can it be shown that the West has advanced morally? Does it stand to reason to hold that because Buddha travelled at the rate of four miles an hour and we traverse the distance of sixty miles within that time, therefore we must be more civilised than the great preacher of Nirvana? We do not intend to deprecate intellectual progress or scientific advancement, or physical, political and economic betterment but we do insist that everything must be subordinated to the moral aim. Science without conscience is an unmitigated evil. The talk of progress without morality is a provoking cant. What we say is this: Do your work with all your heart and all your soul but for God's sake don't be in a hurry. Because we believe in cyclical movement there is no fanaticism in our blood. We know that to work alone we have the right but not to the fruits thereof.

Mr. Hoyland thinks that Christianity stands for an all-round progress but is that the verdict of history? What does Gibbon say and Draper say? There are many again who think that it is the Catholic Church alone that exercised the tyranny of dogma but according to Bury, the famous historian, it is a mistake to suppose that Protestantism ever emancipated thought. Protestantism did nothing of the kind. It did but substitute dogma for dogma and persecuted as relentlessly as the rival Church whenever it could.

Mr. Hoyland says that in the case of Europe there have been periods of decadence and barbarism no doubt, but then there has been also an unconquerable capacity for recovery and herein according to him does Indian History differ from the History of Europe. The plain fact, however, is that India's power of recovery has not been less remarkable. She not only recovered from the invasion of the Persians, Greeks, Saks and Huns but absorbed them all. The Mahratta and Sikh powers rose over the ruins of the Mughal's throne and it is reasonable to believe, that India will rise again like the phoenix from the ashes—when and how nobody can say—but one thing is certain and it is this—that Christian Platonism will have very little to do with the rise of India.

It is also quite possible that the West will fall once more. "Time may come," in the words of Macaulay, "when some New Zealand artist will take his stand on a broken arch of the London bridge and sketch the ruins of St. Paul." Whether the West will decline as rapidly as Oswald Spangler predicts is more than we can say but the fact remains that with all its talk of progress the spirit of re-barbarisation has settled over the face of Europe. That is the opinion of no less a thinker than Mr. Bertrand Russel. All shallow and superficial people are talking of progress—their optimism is temperamental and is also the result of thoughtlessness and prejudice—but in the writings of deep thinkers like Dean Inge and Bertrand Russel a pessimistic note is clear and unmistakable. We shall be glad if the idea of progress saves the West.

We have no quarrel with Christianity or Platonism—in fact, we have a great respect for "Christ's heart and Plato's brain," but what we do hold is that neither Plato nor Christ had anything to do with the so-called idea of progress and so Mr. Hoyland's scheme for India's salvation falls to the ground.

India is the land of idealism—the home of mysticism. This is the impartial opinion of Josiah Royce. India is the land of Yajnya-alkya and Buddha, of Kapila and Patanjali, of Sree Krishna and Ramachandra, of Sankaracharya and Ramanuja. She is the land of devotees like Nanaka and Chaitanya, Tukaram and Kabir, Nama-deva and Surdas and it is only the other day that she produced Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, the prophets of New India. Her heroes are not isolated figures as Mr. Hoyland supposes. They are representative men and their life and message have permeated the mass-mind of the country. It is also a historical fact that

popular education in India was much wider in its scope than it is under the Christian-British Government—and Mr. Hoyland had better take note of this fact.

Because India is the land of idealism and mysticism, because India's message is that of Freedom and Renunciation, because India's tradition is that of deep devotion to her Saints and Avatars, therefore India can very well appreciate the idealists and devotees in all parts of the world ; but if any Westerner in his pride thinks that for idealism we must go to Plato and for devotion we must go to Christ and his disciples, then we must at once spring to our feet and repudiate his pretensions. We believe that in things of the Spirit we must be the teachers of the world. We do not want to be proud but we must meet the pride of the West with our pride. If we are proud at all, well then, in the words of Johnson, "our pride is defensive." But the West should know that the "mild Hindu" can be aggressive too.

NEWS AND REPORTS.

Buddha Anniversary at Rangoon

A representative public meeting was held under the auspices of the Ramakrishna Mission Society, Rangoon, at the Reddiar School Hall, on the evening of the 21st May last, to celebrate the birthday of Bhagawan Buddha. It was attended by a large number of Indian and Burmese gentlemen, and was presided over by the Hon'ble Mr. Justice Mya Bu. Lt.-Col. U. Ba Vet, I.M.S. dwelt on the ascetic practices of Lord Buddha, and explained with much earnestness the four great truths and the eightfold path preached by the Great Master. Mr. Paw Tun, Bar-at-Law, Deputy President of the Legislative Council, next spoke laying stress on Lord Buddha's great love and sympathy for the masses, for the ignorant and the poor. Mr. S. Ramaswamy Aiyer, a member of the Ramakrishna Mission Society, then read out a few extracts from the illustrious Swami Vivekananda's lectures in the West on Lord Buddha and his religion, revealing the great Swami's high regard and love for Buddha. The President, in his concluding remarks reiterated the salient points of the speeches and thanked the lecturers. The meeting terminated with a vote of thanks to the chair.

The Birthday Anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna

The Birthday anniversary of Bhagawan Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated by the Ramakrishna Ashram, Chandpur, Tipperah, on the 29th May last in the premises of the National School. The ceremony was an imposing one. The day dawned with 'Usha Kirtan' followed by the feeding of the poor at noon. In the afternoon there were recitation and sports by the boys. Swami Jnaneshwarananda of the Ramakrishna Mission delivered an impressive lecture on the life and teachings of the Master.

The Birthday was also observed with great eclat at the Ramakrishna Sevashram Baliati, Dacca, on the 5th June last. The programme included special 'Puja,' 'Sankirtan,' poor-feeding, discourses on Srimad Bhagavatam, etc. Swamis Kamaleswarananda, Aksharananda and Rameswarananda of the Belur Math took part in the anniversary. The special feature of the celebration of this year was the opening of the newly erected shrine. In the afternoon a meeting was held with Swami Rameswarananda in the chair, when prizes were distributed to the boys and girls of the free schools conducted by the Ashrama.

Vikrampur Ramakrishna Ashram Sammelan

The first session of the above Sammelan was held at the Ramakrishna Ashram compound, Kalma, Dacca, on the 21st May last. In the absence of His Holiness Srimat Swami Akhandanandaji Maharaj, Vice-President of the Ramakrishna Mission, who was to have presided on the occasion, Srimat Swami Suddhanandaji of the Ramakrishna Mission was elected president. The chairman of the reception committee having finished his address, the president spoke eloquently for nearly two hours. He dwelt on the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, on the aims and objects of the R. K. Mission and on many momentous problems of the day and their solutions. The sittings of the conference extended over three days, the third day being set apart for a general 'Utsav.'

Three resolutions were passed at the Sammelan. Of these one was for forming a representative Standing Committee, while another requested the authorities of the R. K. Mission at Belur to keep a closer touch with all village organisations that were working with the same aim and objects as the Mother Institution. In connection with this Conference a most attractive exhibition of the local products was held, and several lantern lectures were arranged,

The gathering was a distinguished and representative one. Many Swamis of the Ramakrishna Mission delivered instructive speeches at the Sammelan. The whole function was a grand success.

Sri Ramakrishna Sarada Ashram, Ponnampet, Coorg

The new Ashram was opened by Srimat Swami Nirmalanandaji Maharaj, President, Sri Ramakrishna Ashram, Bangalore City, on Friday, the 10th June last. The proceedings of the day began in the morning with Special Puja and the installation of the portrait of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna in the shrine room. After Bhajana the devotees carried in procession a portrait of the Master through the streets of the town. Everywhere big crowds gathered to pay their respectful homage to the Prophet of the age. More than a thousand people were fed on the occasion, both the rich and the poor sitting together.

In the evening, a public meeting was held under the presidency of Srimat Swami Nirmalanandaji Maharaj when speeches were delivered by many Swamis in English, Canarese, Tamil and Malayalam explaining to the villagers, the life and teachings of the Great Master. In his concluding speech the President invoked the blessings of Sri Ramakrishna on the people of the place. The proceedings of the day came to a successful close with a Harikatha Kalakshepam.

Lectures by the Swamis of the Ramakrishna Mission

Under the auspices of the Vivekananda Society, Calcutta, Swami Vishvananda, President, Sri Ramakrishna Ashram, Khar, Bombay, delivered his second lecture in English on "The Message of Swami Vivekananda to Modern India" at the Theosophical Hall, College Square, Calcutta, on the 13th May last. The lecture was very much appreciated by the large audience who gathered to listen to the Swami.

Under the auspices of the Y.M.H.A., Nawalapitiya, Ceylon, Swami Avinasananda of the Ramakrishna Mission, delivered a public lecture on Lord Buddha in the Kathiresan School Hall on the 15th May last, Brahmasri Sathasiva Kurukkal presiding. The Swami spoke very impressively on the life and teachings of the Great Master laying special stress on his doctrine of Ahimsa.

On the occasion of the annual celebration of the Sri Ramakrishna Seva Samiti Ahmedabad, Swami Sambuddhananda, Secre-

tary, Sri Ramakrishna Ashram, Khar, Bombay, delivered two very interesting lectures in English before a large audience in the local Town Hall, on the 22nd and 23rd May last. The subject of the first lecture was "Sri Ramakrishna and Universal Religion," and that of the second was "Formal Worship in Hinduism." Both the lectures were much appreciated by all present. He also gave another address on "Practical Vedanta" in the Conaught Hall, Rajkot, on the 2nd June to the great satisfaction and benefit of his hearers.

At the invitation of the public, Swami Omkarananda of the Ramakrishna Mission, Belur, visited many districts of Eastern Bengal. During this tour, the Swami delivered a series of lectures at different places. At Noakhali he spoke on the "Life and Teachings of Sri Ramakrishna," and "Vedanta in practical life." At Dacca he delivered three lectures, one at the Jagannath College Hall, the second at the Buli Institute and the third at Jindabazar,—the subjects being "Problems of the Age," "Karma Yoga" and "Message of Swami Vivekananda," respectively. At Baliati and Sonargan he addressed the students on the "Duties of the Students." At Chandpur he spoke on "Swami Vivekananda's message to the young men of Bengal," and at Narayanganj on "Works before Modern India." He also delivered an impressive lecture on the "Harmony of Religions" at the Ramakrishna Ashram Sammelan, Kalna, Dacca.

Ananda Ashrama, La Crescenta

A special feature marked the celebration of Easter this year at the Ananda Ashrama, La Crescenta. On Easter Sunday Swami Paramananda consecrated a part of the Ashrama premises—a newly graded hill—to the building of the "Temple of the Universal Spirit"—a temple where the adherents of all faiths could gather without let or hindrance for their daily worship. In the afternoon the Swami held a Service on this ground and strewed the spot with flowers where the altar is to stand. After the ceremony he delivered an address to those present on the occasion.

The Ramakrishna Mission Sevashram, Narayanganj

We are glad to acknowledge the receipt of the Sixth Annual Report of the above Ashram from January 1925 to December 1926.

During this period the Sevashram did splendid services which mainly consisted of rendering relief to the aged, the invalid and the destitute, picking up helpless sick persons from the roadside and carrying them to the hospital for treatment, *mela*-relief, epidemic relief, etc. It also conducted a free library and a primary school for the poor.

It is gratifying to note that nearly four thousand patients were treated at the out-door Dispensary, and that another four hundred persons including those suffering from Phthisis, Cholera, Pneumonia, Typhoid, etc., were nursed in their own homes and supplied with free medicines and diet whenever necessary.

The total receipts during the years under review including the balance of the previous year, donation for building fund, subscriptions, etc., were Rs. 5,486-6-3. The entire amount was spent for the different items of service.

The management appeal to the generous public for funds for building a permanent home for the Sevashram. We hope the kind-hearted public would liberally contribute their mite and enable the workers to render their service to the poor with greater efficiency.

THE VEDANTA KESARI

"Let the lion of Vedanta roar."

"Let me tell you, strength, strength is what we want
And the first step in getting strength is to uphold
The Upanishads and believe that 'I am the Atman.'"

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

VOLUME XIV]

AUGUST 1927

[NUMBER 4

PRAYER.

ॐ

न वै याचे राज्य न च कलकमानिष्यमिदं
न याचेऽहं रम्यां सकलजनकाभ्यां वरवधूम् ।
सदा काले काले प्रमथपतिना गीतचरितो
जगन्नाथः स्वामी नयनपथगामी भवतु मे ॥
इदं त्वं संसारं दुततरमसारं सुरपते
इदं त्वं पापानां विततिमपरां यावदपते ।
अहो दीनेऽनाथे निश्चितमच्छलं निश्चिपदं
जगन्नाथः स्वामी नयनपथगामी भवतु मे ॥

Oh Lord ! I do not beg either for kingdom or for wealth of gold and jewels. Nor do I ask for a beautiful wife, so eagerly desired by men. Thy glory is always sung even by the great God Siva. O Mighty Lord of the Universe ! Reveal Thyself unto me.

Oh God of gods ! Pray, remove from my mind all charms for this vain and fleeting world. Lord, take away the heaps of heinous sins from me. Oh God, Thou bestowest Thy unfailing mercy ever upon the miserable and the helpless. O Mighty Lord of the Universe ! Reveal Thyself unto me.

SRI CHAITANYA.

SPIRITUAL TALKS OF SWAMI BRAHMANANDA

(At the Ramakrishna Mission Sevashram, Kankhal, Hardwar)

Every one wants happiness. Who would like to undergo pain and misery ? But how to obtain that happiness ? Certainly, not by running after the fleeting pleasures of the senses, and ignoring Him, Who is the abode of all happiness. He has created many playthings to delude the human mind. Throw away all these and pray to Him. He will then hasten to take you in His arms. Do you want God or playthings ? You cannot have both at the same time.

I tell you, you have had play enough ; now it is high time to give it up and call upon the Mother. When a child is fond of play, the mother gives it some toys to play with and while away its time. But the child that does not care for any play she carries with her. Happy is the child that sits in its mother's lap. It not only enjoys the play but also has the happiness arising out of its mother's company ; whereas the child that is engaged in play enjoys it no doubt but also exposes itself to risks incidental to play. It may be that its toys will break or it will pick up a quarrel with its playmates and get beaten as well. But the child in the mother's lap experiences no such troubles. It is always happy and knows full well that the mother will take care of it and supply all its wants.

The parable of the mango grove told by Sri Ramakrishna is very instructive. " You have come to eat the mangoes. Why do you bother yourself about the number of trees, branches, leaves, etc., in the garden ? Eat the mangoes and be satisfied." You have come into this world for the realisation of God. Accomplish this object first of all and fulfil your life's mission. Solve

your own problem and equip yourself for the life's journey. Struggle hard and become deathless by tasting the Immortal Bliss. Pray to Him day and night. In whatever form you think of Him it will certainly do you good. Whatever form or name appeals to you, take it up sincerely and pray to Him. You are sure to get a vision of Him. Parvati once asked Mahadeva how Sachchidananda could be realised. The reply was—"Through Faith."

You have been already shown the right path. Follow it with faith, patience and perseverance. No more waste your time in discussing the forms and details of your Sadhana. Pray to Him in any way you please, and you are sure to get His blessings. Sri Ramakrishna used to say, "A sweetened bread will ever taste sweet in whatever way you begin to eat it." You are as it were sitting under the *Kalpataru* (wish-yielding tree) and you shall get whatever you ask for.

Don't think yourselves too clever. The crow thinks itself very clever but it always lives on filth. Those who are too clever in this world get cheated in the long run.

With a faith that knows no wavering plunge yourselves in deep meditation. Do not get disheartened if after a little practice you do not realise God. The ocean is full of precious gems, but you may not get them at the first dive. My boys, once again I enjoin you, have firm faith in the words of your Guru, and try to get absorbed in deep meditation. Be sure, sooner or later you will have a vision of the Lord. Do not allow your mind to get distracted. Keep steadily and patiently to your Sadhana. His grace will descend on you in due time. Suppose you wish to see a great man. You have first to see and satisfy his attendants. Similarly to obtain the grace of the Lord you have to seek the help of godly men and undergo many spiritual practices. Knowing Him to be dearer than the dearest, pray to Him with a yearning heart for His

grace and vision. Cry unto the Lord like a child. Incessant cry cannot but make the mother run towards it. So also with the Lord. He reveals Himself to him who unceasingly prays for His grace and vision.

Shake off your slumber, and seek the grace of the Lord with steadfast devotion. Make the mind one-pointed like the mariner's compass. In whatever direction the ship may sail the compass will always point to the north, thus keeping the ship to its route. Just so with the human mind. If it is fixed on God there will be nothing to fear. By chance if one falls amidst bad environments even then his faith and devotion will remain unshaken. The moment he hears any talk about God he becomes mad with divine love—just as the flint lying under water for a hundred years when taken out and struck emits sparks without fail. Those who have been favoured with a vision of the Lord have their mind always fixed on Him. They will have no taste for anything except the talk about Him and the company of holy men. Like the cast-away leaf tossed to and fro by the wind, be content to remain wherever you are placed by the Lord. Do not have any will or desire of your own.

Your mind is now pure and untainted. Try to keep it in this state always. The spotless mind is like a dry match stick. It ignites the moment you strike it, but it is no good if it gets wet. You may go on striking it but it will only break into pieces. Similarly if the mind once becomes soiled you will find it extremely difficult to restore it to its former purity.

EDITORIAL NOTES

The Missionary Spirit in Hinduism

"India," says Swami Vivekananda, "was once a great missionary power. Hundreds of years before England was converted to Christianity, Buddha sent out missionaries to convert the world of Asia to his doctrine." Even as early as the third century before Christ, king Asoka sent Buddhist preachers as far as the Hellenistic kingdoms in Africa and Europe. And not only Buddhism but also its spiritual mother Hinduism has ever been a missionary faith though the methods of conversion followed by the two might have been somewhat different. Besides assimilating innumerable aboriginal peoples and foreign invading hordes, Hinduism spread its noble influence over lands beyond seas and mountains, and brought new races and tribes into its mighty fold. But freedom was the condition of this growth. With the loss of political power, the Hindus became the object of onslaught by the religion and culture of the foreign conquerors. And for centuries the most vital problem before the Hindu society has been not one of expansion but of self-protection, and this by raising defensive walls of rules and restrictions round its votaries. In consequence Hinduism has had to become passive and exclusive. But even during this slow pulsation of its life, the silent process of absorption has been going on unimpeded as ever. And now through the grace of Providence the soul of Hinduism is reasserting itself in all its vigour. Passivity is giving place to activity, and exclusiveness to the dynamic spirit of expansion. To save itself from the attack of alien faiths perverting its adherents, Hinduism is trying to be aggressively missionary like the militant religions of the world. There seems to be a tendency in some of our present day Hindu movements

to lay greater stress on the formal than on the cultural conversion of new adherents. Hinduism has been placed between the horns of a dilemma. Unless it freely admits new members into its fold it dwindles in strength, while if it receives fresh converts without converting their hearts, it strays away from its very ideals of assimilation and growth.

Conversion, Formal and Spiritual

True conversion is a spiritual transformation that benefits both the convert and the community to which he comes to belong. Formal conversion, on the other hand, has nothing to do with the spirit of religion. It makes the convert lead only a life of hypocrisy and lowers his own cultural tone as well as that of the society into which he is taken. The missionaries of Islam and Christianity have ever been trying their utmost to swell their numbers without caring very much to make the converts imbibe their respective cultures. The inordinate passion of zealots for converting the whole world to their faiths has made them seek the support of the State, and propagate their doctrines even at the point of the sword. This has led to the lowering of the standards of the Islamic and Christian religions in different parts of the world. As a matter of fact there exists among the masses of those two faiths more of bigotry and fanaticism than true toleration and devotion. But even in spite of the present degeneration due to political and other causes, the average Hindu is able to maintain a cultural level higher than that of the followers of other religions. This has been possible only because Hinduism has ever been true to the ideal of evolutionary conversion and slow absorption of foreign elements into its fold. But militant Islam and Christianity seem to be giving rise to a militant form of Hinduism at present. And some of our modern Hindu reform movements are anxious to follow the Semitic method of propagating the faith. It is their indomitable

love for Hinduism that urges them to take steps for preventing Hindu society from dwindling. This again is responsible for their attempts to increase the Hindu population by the free admission of perverts and converts from other faiths. But to be true to the soul of Hinduism great stress should be laid on instilling its ideals into the hearts of those coming into its fold.

Stemming the Tide of Conversion

To stop effectively the conversion of its followers to other faiths, Hinduism must remove the causes that make this change of religion possible at all. The charm of economic uplift and social betterment are the two main reasons that make the Hindus of the so-called lower and depressed classes enter the fold of other religions. For arresting this movement towards alien faiths, organisations for the economic and social regeneration of the Hindu masses should be started all over the country. The work has no doubt been begun to some extent, but it should be conducted with greater intelligence and efficiency than at present. The narrow restrictions of caste and the curse of untouchability are to be removed by all possible means as early as possible. Attempts should be made to solve the economic problems of the masses by adopting improved means of agriculture and scientific farming, introducing cottage arts and industries, and organising co-operative societies devoted mainly to the welfare of the poor. Side by side with their social and economic improvement, the work for their moral and spiritual uplift should also be taken up in right earnest. In spite of their innate spiritual nature the Indian masses lack a clear conception of the higher ideals of religion. Owing to ignorance and superstition they are following various evil customs that are standing in the way of their progress. The great need of the hour is an all-round education on national lines. The entire heritage of the Hindu race is to be democratised

and thrown broadcast to all irrespective of caste or creed. The masses must be made to realise the glory of their ancient faith in its manifold aspects. In short they are to be elevated economically, socially, morally and spiritually. Speaking of the uplift of the masses says Swami Vivekananda—"Our masses are very good because poverty here is not a crime. Our masses are not violent. Our masses are much more civilized than European masses. We have to give them secular education. We have to follow the plan laid down by our ancestors, that is, to bring all the ideals slowly down among the masses. Raise them slowly up, raise them to equality. Impart even secular knowledge through religion. . . . Keep the motto before you 'Elevation of the masses without injuring their religion.'" It is by raising the present deplorable condition of the people that their influx into other religions can be most successfully stopped. The surest way of stemming the tide of conversion is to remove its possibility altogether.

The Evils of Formal Conversion

The conversion of the poor Hindu to Christianity or Islam does not necessarily mean the triumph of the Gospel or the Koran. The main object of the change of creed as already pointed out is not spiritual illumination but the betterment of the social and economic condition of the convert. But material gain almost invariably proves to be a spiritual loss. What a sympathetic western writer speaks of the poor convert to Christianity is equally true of all who change their religions for merely material gain. "Where once he called on Vishnu or Shiva, he now turns a bewildered face up to the empty skies, shorn of the garments of his dreams. . . . All things that were natural and free to him, are wrong; all that he thought good is bad. He receives a vague, elusive, cold and unfamiliar maze of words in exchange for all the intimate and beloved

manifestation of his old belief. The new religion does not make him happy, because it is an imperfect system, imperfectly practised and taught." And not only the so-called convert but also his proselytising faith sustains a loss. It introduces into its body foreign elements which it is not able to assimilate. It thereby sows the seed of the degeneration of its distinctive culture. To say the least, formal conversion does incalculable harm to the cause of religion,

The Remedy

Hinduism has an infinite scope for true conversion and assimilation of new elements, both individual and collective. But should it also make formal conversion an inseparable part of its missionary activities? To this we say an emphatic "no." New converts should be freely admitted; perverts also should be re-converted. But the greatest care should be taken to Hinduise them all in life and thought as fully as possible. Otherwise, conversions for swelling the numbers will prove disastrous to the true spirit of religion. To stop the craze for the indiscriminate admission of new members into the various religious folds, the outlook of the preachers must be completely changed. Militant missionaries who vehemently denounce the religions of others must first of all try to live up to the ideals of their own faiths and then realise the essential truths lying at the back of all other faiths. To cure the disease we must go to its very root cause. "The remedy," observes a writer in the *Indian Review*, "lies in establishing the fundamental principle that 'all paths lead to God,' that there is no religion which alone can claim to be the highest. Ramakrishna Paramahansa of Bengal may be said to be the prophet of this attitude. He laid stress on 'Jeeverdaya' and 'Shiver bhakti,' love for the living and devotion to God, and 'Dharmasamanwaya', a synthesis of religions. Dean Inge the other day uttered a

very sage remark when he said that no longer should the Western missionary busy himself so much with making more converts as with living a Christian ideal himself. Such an attitude will turn our eyes inwards and we shall think more of becoming good and religious than of trying to make others good and religious."

Sri Ramakrishna's Ideal of a Religious's Preacher

"He alone is the real teacher," says Sri Ramakrishna, "who is illuminated by the light of Knowledge." The religious missionary must first of all strive to realise the truths of his religion before he attempts to preach them to others. But unfortunately the ordinary preacher has little spiritual experience to his credit. He takes to preaching as a profession and trades in religion. That is why he introduces into the holy domain of religion the strife and competition of the world. It is for want of efficient teachers that religious life is at a low ebb to-day. The greatest task before all missionary bodies is to train properly and send out the right type of teachers for the spiritual regeneration of those they want to save. The cause of religion will be better served if the preacher would proclaim the glory of his faith more by his own life than by the denunciation of the religions of others. He alone can win true converts to his faith who has converted himself in spirit. Such a great soul becomes a preacher by Divine right, and draws round him sincere men and women by the magnetic influence of his life. It is this ideal of a true preacher that Sri Ramakrishna proclaims when he says—"Of itself does the bee come to the full-blown flower when its sweet aroma is wafted by the breeze. The ants come of themselves to the spot where sweets are placed. No one need invite the bee or the ant. So when a man becomes pure and perfect the sweet influence of his character is diffused everywhere, and all who seek for Truth are naturally drawn towards him, and he need not be going

about in search of an audience to listen to him." Religious strifes will stop and peace and harmony will reign on earth if the missionaries of religions would hold before them this noble ideal embodied in the lives of all the greatest teachers of the world.

THE UPANISHADIC REVELATION OF TRUTH

By K. S. Ramaswami Sastri, B.A., B.L.

Though the Upanishads are among the most widely read books of the world, very few persons in the West have been able to realise the evolution and ascent of thought in those scriptures, the sublimest of the productions of Hindu genius. Some of them think that the Upanishads are a medley of philosophic theories such as Monism, Idealism, Pluralism, etc. Others think that the works contain a few gems of intuitive genius imbedded in a rocky mine of guess and superstition, yet others consider them to be relics of a barbaric age. These superstitions of scholarship have found echoes in India also.

Among the basic misconceptions about the Indian genius are the ideas represented by the vague words determinism, fatalism, and pessimism. We are told that the Hindu thought in general, and the Upanishads in particular, are vitiated by the above defects. Strangely enough these words are hurled at works which declare the eternal and limitless freedom and bliss of the Soul:—आनन्दरूपममृतं यद्विभाति । That Which shines, being of the nature of bliss and immortality.

The great merit of the Upanishads lies in their appeal to the highest elements of our nature and in their power to captivate the mystic as well as the philanthropist, the thinker as well as the man of emotion and imagination. The attempt to study them apart from the remaining portions of the Vedas is foredoomed to failure. There is no difference of doctrine between the Samhita and the Upanishads, though there is a difference of emphasis.

The entire search of the Upanishads is in the direction of the central spiritual unity. After wandering amidst the labyrinths of modern cosmogonies seeking the origin of things in matter or protoplasm or *elan Vital*—all of them seeking in matter the *matrix*

of life—it is refreshing to turn to the Upanishadic Seers seeking in the spirit the *matrix* of matter and life.

तत्त्वलाभीति शान्त उपासीत ।

—Adore IT with a tranquil mind as That Which creates and preserves and destroys the universe—*Chhandogya Upanishad*.

यतो वा इमानि भूतानि जायन्ते । येन
जातानि जीवन्ति । यत्प्रयन्त्यभिसंविशन्ति ।
तद्विजिज्ञासस्व । तद्वसेति ।

—Know That to be Brahman Whence every thing is born Which sustains every born thing and into Which all enter at the time of dissolution—*Taittiriya Upanishad*.

सदेव सोम्येदमग्र आसीत् एकमेवाद्वितीयम् ।

—Pure existence alone, O child, existed at first. It was one and without a second—*Chhandogya Upanishad*.

सोऽकामयत् बहुस्यां प्रजायेयेति ।

—He desired—Let me become many—*Taittiriya Upanishad*.

तस्माद्वा एतस्मादात्मन आकाशः संभूतः । आका
शाद्वायुः । वायोरग्निः । अग्नेरापः । अद्भ्यः पृथिवी ।

—From this Atman ether was born ; from ether mind was born ; from mind fire was born ; from fire water was born ; from water earth was born—*Taittiriya Upanishad*.

स्वभावमेकै कवयो वदन्ति कालं तथान्ये
परिमुह्यमानाः । देवस्यैव महिमा तु लोके
येनेदं ब्राम्ह्यते ब्रह्मचक्रम् ॥

—Some of the deluded seers and singers call it Nature and others call it Time. The Brahmic wheel which revolves in the world is due to the glory of God—*Svetasvetaropanishad*.

Even more valuable than this unwavering declaration about origins is the Upanishadic discussion of the nature of the enquirer himself. By the analysis of the three states of consciousness and by a vigorous process of self-scrutiny and self-dissection, the truth about the unity of the Atman is reached and proclaimed. In the Upanishads named above we find a clear and successful attempt to isolate the Atman from its five Sheaths (Pancha kosas). Some Scholars have been bold enough to declare that the idea of transmigration is an un-Aryan idea. Professor Macdonnell says : "It seems more probable that the Aryan settlers received the first impulse in this direction from the *aboriginal inhabitants of India*." (*History of Sanskrit Literature*, p. 387). He says further :

"The Aryan Indians borrowed the idea from the aborigines, they certainly deserve the credit of having elaborated out of it, the theory of an unbroken chain of existences, intimately connected with the moral principles of requital." This view is thoroughly incorrect. In the 16th hymn in Mandala X of the *Rig-Veda* we find the following verse :

दृश्यं चक्षुर्गच्छतु वातमात्मायां च
गच्छ पृथिवीं च धर्मणा ।
आपोवा गच्छयद्दि तत्र तेहितं ओषधीषु
प्रति तिष्ठा शरीरे ।

—May the eye-sense reach the sun and my Atman (energy) the wind. According to thy merit go to heaven or to the earth. Go to the waters if there is benefit there or reach embodiments in plants.

This passage shows that the soul is to go to the heaven or to the earth according to the actions and qualities (Dharma). The doctrine of transmigration is more clearly stated in the 58th hymn, 1—12, in Mandala X of the same Veda. The Rishi says therein that he can by the power of his hymn call back the soul "which may have gone to heaven or earth or to the four-cornered globe." Roth and Bohtlingk and Geldner controvert the view of Oldenberg who holds that the doctrine of transmigration does not exist in the *Rig-Veda*, and refer to the *Rig-Veda* I, 164, 30 and 38. These hymns state that the soul moves backwards and forwards and returns frequently to the earth.

The idea of transmigration is expressly declared in the *Upanishads*. The *Katha Upanishad* says सस्यमिव मर्त्यः पच्यते सस्यमिवा जायते पुनः—Man ripens like corn and like corn he is born again.

The *Bṛihadaranyaka Upanishad* states the doctrine in the most explicit terms. The *Chhandogya Upanishad* also refers to the Devayāna and Pitrayāna of the departed soul. From the above view of the soul, we proceed by a natural evolution of thought, to the means of attaining the highest Bliss. The *Upanishads* insist equally on mental and physical purity. Because such purity is the only means which leads to devotion and knowledge and realisation. In the *Katha Upanishad* it is said :

नाविरतो दुष्करिताज्ञानान्तो नासमाहितः ।
नाशान्तमानसो वापि प्रज्ञानेनैव ब्रह्मवात् ॥

—He cannot be attained by one who has not abstained from evil ways nor has attained concentration nor reached mental tranquillity. We can attain Him by realised knowledge.

Hence abstention from sin and composure and steadfastness and purity of mind are the *sine qua non* of acquiring true blessedness of spirit. Equally important is the Upanishadic stress on physical purity. Again, it is the first and most essential portion of the food we take that moulds and shapes and energises the mind.

अन्नमयं हि सोम्य मनः ॥

—The mind, O child, is of the essence of the food.

Chhandogya Upanishad.

आहारशुद्धौ सत्त्वशुद्धिः

सत्त्वशुद्धौ ध्रुवा स्मृतिः स्मृतिलम्बे

सर्वग्रन्थीनां विग्रमोक्षः ॥

—The Satwic purity comes only when there is purity of what we take in. When there is a Satwic purity then comes steady memory. We attain freedom from all ties when we attain steadiness of memory—*Chhandogya Upanishad.*

In the above passage the word Ahara is interpreted by Sri Ramanujacharya as meaning food and by Sri Sankaracharya as meaning all the sense-impressions and sense-enjoyments which are allowed to come in through the gate of the senses. That is why in India mysticism, metaphysics and morality are but interrelated and interlinked entities. Morality is not an end in itself. Nor can mental purity exist apart from physical purity. Mysticism is not a mood but a blossom of morality. Metaphysics is not a mere mental jugglery but a deep spiritual experience. The hortatory convocation address in the *Taittiriya Upanishad*, the concepts of Sreyas and Preyas in the *Kathopanishad*, and the concept of enjoyment by renunciation in the *Isha Upanishad* give us a perfect system of ethics as the scaffolding of a perfected mysticism and metaphysics.

Upon the purified mind shines the resplendent vision of God. Without such vision the religion of works and activism is a vain weariness of flesh and spirit. God is omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent. He is the source and basis of everything. He is immanence and transcendence. By devotion born of purity of mind and of body we realise Him.

तत्त्व मः सा सर्वमिदं विभाति

--By His radiance all this shines—*Katha Upanishad*.

परास्य शक्तिं विविधैव ध्रूयते ।

स्वाभाविकी ज्ञानं बलं क्रियाच्च ॥

—His power is said to be supreme and diverse. Knowledge, power and action are natural to Him—*Swetaswetara Upanishad*.

तेनेद् दूर्णं पुरुषेण सर्वं—This whole is filled with the Purusha—*Swetaswetara Upanishad*.

The Upanishads do not stop with this declaration of the nature of God. They further declare that by Jnana as the result of Bhakti and Yoga one can realise the transcendental oneness of the soul and the Oversoul in the blissful Absolute.

And this Absolute Brahman is described : सत्यं ज्ञानं अमन्तं ब्रह्म—Brahma is Infinite, Being, and Knowledge.—*Taittiriya Upanishad*. अयमात्मा ब्रह्म—The soul is Brahman—*Brithadaranyaka Upanishad*. अहं ब्रह्मास्मि—I am Brahman — *Brithadaranyaka Upanishad*. तत्त्वमसि—Thou art That—*Chhandogya Upanishad* सर्वं सत्त्विद् ब्रह्म—All this is Brahman—*Chhandogya Upanishad*. योऽसावसौ पुरुषः सोऽहमस्मि—That Purusha is myself - *Isha Upanishad*.

Thus the supreme value of the Upanishadic revelation of Truth is in the revelation of the Para-Vidya leading to the Supreme Realisation. Such a realisation can be had here and now (अत्र ब्रह्म समश्नुते). With the aid of the Sad-Guru and the Sat-Shastra and our disciplined purity and endeavour the highest Goal can be reached—the Goal of infinite eternal freedom and bliss described in the *Mundaka Upanishad* as आनन्दरूपममृतं यद् विभाति—That Which shines being of the nature of bliss and immortality.

SPIRITUAL VALUE.

By A. Govindacharya Swami.

As a Sanskrit couplet says, three wayfarers one an ascetic, another a roue and the third a dog saw a beautiful damsel passing by. The feeling of the ascetic when he looked at her was that she was as good as a corpse fit to be shunned. The feeling excited in the roue was that of a debauchee, while the dog felt that her flesh would serve as an excellent food for him. Thus the selfsame object evoked three different kinds of feelings utterly at variance with one another carrying three different values. But these are the judgments from a worldly standpoint. When on the other

hand we find Arjuna wooed by Urvashi, the courtesan of Indra's court, falling at her feet as if she were his mother, we are struck by a non-worldly and spiritual value. In our own days we have the example of the saintly Ramakrishna who worshipped his own wife, demonstrating thereby to the world at large that there can be a state in which all sex cravings can be made conspicuous by their absence through the culturing of an intense yearning for God. This is yet a higher stage in the ladder of Spiritual values.

We may dwell on some other varieties of values taken up at random from the great epic *Ramayana*. Sita the holy consort of Sri Rama, once exclaimed :

यः त्वया सह सः स्वर्गो ।

निरयो यः त्वया विना ॥

"Thy company, Rama, is my heaven. Separation from thee is my hell."

But the reverse was the case with Kaikeyi, the step-mother of Rama, for separation from Rama was heaven to her, whereas his staying in Ayodhya was deemed as hell. Thus the appraisalment of facts by human beings varies according to the feelings which sway their heart. A sinner does not see what a saint sees. And so it is said in the Gita :

या निशा सर्वभूतानां तस्यां जागर्ति संयमी ।

यस्यां जाग्रति भूतानि सा निशा पश्यतो मुनेः ॥

"To the spiritual man, the world is full of darkness which to the worldly man is full of light, but what to the former is effulgence is darkness to the latter". This very same idea is reflected beautifully in Christ's abdication of the whole world to save his precious soul and in the sale by Faust of his self to Mephistophiles for worldly considerations.

In the *Ramayana* again we find that when Sugriva, the monkey friend of Sri Rama, returned unscathed after discomfiting the fiend Ravana, Sri Rama addressed him thus :—

त्वयि किञ्चित् समपन्ने किं कार्यं सीताया मम ।

"Had anything untoward happened to thee, O Sugriva, in your encounter with Ravana, Sita for whose sake so much of our united effort has been put in would then in my view become a person utterly worthless to me." This is the value of genuine friendship which would not in the least be affected by any consideration whatsoever even it be that of the closest and holy tie with one's better half. Sita's value to Sri Rama would have been completely ignored by him had even the slightest injury

happened to Sugriva. Sugriva was all in all to Rama and he was of the utmost value to him—so much so that लोकनाथः पुरातुत्वा सुग्रीवं नावमिच्छति "having himself been the Lord of the whole world, Sri Rama would have Sugriva as his Lord." Here the value of friendship coupled with Sugriva's devotedness to his master's concerns was of a spiritual worth. And this raised Sugriva to a dignity and position far surpassing that accorded to Sri Rama himself.

Another value is evinced by Sri Rama towards Vibhishana—the brother of Ravana, his antagonist. Vibhishana left Lanka when he found that his brother could never be brought to his senses. He repaired to Rama's camp and begged of the sentinels, Sugriva and others for admittance to his presence. They took him for a spy from Ravana and were reluctant to grant his request. Making him stand outside they went to Sri Rama and told him that a spy had come seeking admission to his presence and requested his permission to slay him. But Rama did not yield to their request but on the other hand made them understand that even if Ravana himself would come to his doors he will be welcome. For, said he, "I am the asylum for all refugees. I have incarnated on earth to demonstrate the truth of the Saranagati Dharma." So saying, he commanded them to allow Vibhishana to come to his presence. It is apparent that here the divine law of grace is the spiritual value involved.

The characteristic feature of Vibhishana and Sugriva is that both of them denied themselves a material kingdom for the sake of divine service. Their ideal of life was spirituality, was the service of Rama, the God incarnate, and this they considered as the only riches to be coveted. Sugriva incurred the wrath of his own brother Bali in order to be able to serve God, and so did Vibhishana who renouncing all his immense wealth ran away from his brother and took refuge at the feet of Sri Rama with the sole object of serving the Lord. All these go to show that true life is that which is consecrated to the service of the Lord on the score of its having the highest spiritual value. As regards this view of life no two religions on the face of the earth disagree. Of all the philosophies in the world the Vedanta lays the greatest stress on it.

Exactly the same ideal of unworldliness is upheld in the Dravidian Sri Vaishnava literature also. It is said that the God-

intoxicated saint Tirumazhisai Alwar was once confronted with Rudra, one of the deities of the Vedic Trinity. Pleased with the Alwar's penance Rudra appeared before him and bade him ask for a boon. Thereupon the saint inquired if he could give Moksha or liberation from all kinds of bondage to which the soul is subject. But when Rudra expressed his inability to grant this boon the Alwar said, "Then, please go your way." But it would be beneath the dignity of a being of my prestige to return without giving some boon or other", rejoined Rudra. "Then let this thread," retorted the saint, "with which I am repairing my tattered cloth pass through the eye of this needle." Rudra was abashed and withdrew. For, the saint he found was made of such a spiritual stuff that he set no value on worldly goods and therefore could ask for none of them. This unworldliness is the characteristic feature of all religious geniuses born in this world with a mission to divert the gaze of mankind from worldly tinsels to spiritual riches which are theirs by birthright. But alas! mankind being somehow or other caught in worldly enjoyments is blind to its own heritage. Man is the heir apparent to the kingdom of God,—so declare all the apostles of God. His ultimate value therefore actually rests elsewhere than in this world which unfortunately he takes to be his only concern. Not to speak of the highly evolved men such as the Messiahs of God or the apostles appointed by Him, we have also examples of wise men known for their broad outlook on life such as Keshab Chunder Sen. In his lecture on *Regenerating Faith* Keshab Chunder Sen says as follows: "The regenerate man is unto the world and its temptations an altogether dead man. Place before him all the treasures of the world, they don't excite his avarice; ply his senses with the most enticing objects of sensual delight, his senses cannot even feel their influence; offer him all manner of selfish enjoyments, these have no power over him, for all senses and carnal affections and self-love are dead, and he is impervious to temptations as a dead body." The elevated soul is dead to the world which has no absolute worth, but is alive unto God who is his all-value.

In the Mahabharata one very instructive incident is chronicled. Duryodhana and his brothers who formed the Kaurava party were fratricidal to the Pandavas, their cousin brothers. The Pandavas were the devotees of Sri Krishna. Sri Krishna to avoid an unhappy strife amongst the cousins went on an embassy to the Court of Duryodhana, but it proved unsuccessful. Although the Kauravas refused to fulfil the wishes of Sri Krishna, they still wanted to

honour him as a plenipotentiary by inviting him to a dinner. But Sri Krishna declined to accept their invitation saying,

द्विषन्नम् न भोक्ष्यम्
द्विषन्तं नैव भोजयेत् ।
पाण्डवान् द्विषसि राजन्
मम प्राणा हि पाण्डवाः

"No food should be taken in the enemy's camp; nor should the enemy be fed. O king Duryodhana ! (Thou art my enemy because) Thou art the enemy of my devotees, the Pandavas" 'Again in the same epic is narrated the incident of Sri Krishna's condescension to go to the humble cottage of Vidura—Vidura who was unlike Duryodhana and his brothers, humble and great in spirituality. Sri Krishna gladly partook of the food so lovingly offered to him by Vidura and felt greatly pleased because Vidura's food was pure and worthy. Here we find two different values attached to one and the same thing—food, viz., the value of impurity to the food offered by a non-devotee and the value of purity to that offered by a devotee. The former is based on material value and the latter on the spiritual value. Another truth is also demonstrated here by the behaviour of Sri Krishna. His hatred to the Kauravas was engendered by the hatred to his devotees—the Pandavas, and this signifies that although God is equally friendly to all he gets offended too when His own beloved ones, the saints and devotees are hated. Hence offending the devotees of God tantamounts to offending God himself.

In the biography of the Sri Vishnavas figures the sage Parasara Bhattarya who had two wives. One day when he was in a jovial mood with them he asked one of them what she thought of him. She promptly replied "as husband" Then he put the same question to his other wife. She replied "as saviour." Evidently the first reply breathes worldliness while the other spirituality. To the latter the sage Parasara Bhattarya was of the spiritual value.

Bearing on the subject in hand there is a story from the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. Rishi Yajnavalkya had two wives, Maitreyi and Katyayani. He intended to give up the world and retire to the forest for contemplating on God. Before doing so he wanted to divide his property between his two wives. At the prospect of getting property Katyayani was very happy, while Maitreyi put to him the question why he wished to retire to the forest. The husband replied—अमृतस्य तु नाशास्तु विद्येन—"Immortality

cannot be purchased with riches." So I abandon it and take to spirituality. Maitreyi promptly replied that she too would like to renounce and go with him to the forest to share in his spiritual pursuits that would ensure immortality.

From what has been said above it would be seen clearly that the greatest importance was attached to spiritual values in India. How this spiritual ideal has deteriorated during the British rule in India is told by Prof. Radhakrishnan in his latest book on *Indian Philosophy*, volume II. He says—"It is easy to understand the feeling of the Indians of the beginning of the nineteenth century who after generations of public strife and private suffering welcomed the British rule as the dawn of a golden age; but it should be equally easy to sympathise with the Indian feeling of the present day that the spirit of man craves, not comfort but happiness, not peace and order but life and liberty, not economic stability or equitable administration but the right to work out one's own salvation even at the cost of infinite toil and tribulation. Even non-political virtues do not thrive in the absence of political autonomy. British rule has given India peace and security but they are not ends in themselves. If we are to put first things first then we must admit that economic stability and political security are only means, however valuable and necessary, to spiritual freedom. A bureaucratic despotism which forgets spiritual ends for all its integrity and enlightenment cannot invigorate the peoples beneath her sway and cannot therefore evoke any living response in them. When the founts of life are drying up when the ideals of which the race stood for millenniums, the glow of consciousness, the free exercise of faculty, the play of life, the pleasure of mind and the fullness of peace, *pranaramam*, *mana-anandam*, *santi-samridham*, are decaying, it is no wonder that the Indian is conscious only of the crushing burden and not of the lifted weight. It is no use speaking to him of the magnitude of Britain's work, for the verdict of history is passed on the spiritual quality of the achievement." If the Westerners are the faithful followers of the "coloured" Christ, they must attach spiritual value to their mission on earth and carry out their holy Master's Commandment "I come not to destroy but to fulfil." Conservation of spiritual values wherever found ought to be the slogan of the coming civilisation. India presents that ideal to the world to-day, and let us hope that the West would not be slow to recognise it and profit by it.

THE APOCALYPSE UNVEILED *

By Swami Prabhavananda

CHAPTER II.

I have explained in the previous chapter, that the seven Churches represent symbolically the seven centers or *Chakras* in the body. The awakening has now come and the neophyte understands the existence of the spiritual force within himself. He has not yet the actual vision or realization of these centers, but he does know that they exist and also that they have to be conquered. The *Kundalini* or coiled up spiritual force must be released; it must pass through, and by doing so, conquer all the centers. To each of these *Chakras* (churches) is sent a message, and in these messages we find the nature and function of each revealed. A reward in the form of particular powers is promised on the conquest of each *Chakra*.

In the message to the church of Ephesus which stands for the *Muladhar Chakra*, we find its nature and function indicated. This *Chakra* which is situated below the genitals and above the anus, is said to be the seat of the subconscious mind. In it are stored the impressions—good and bad—of all our past deeds and actions.

Nothing is lost in this universe. Whatever we do or think leaves an impression in our minds. Our present life is the result of our past deeds. They are not lost but remain as a bundle in the subconscious mind. As we turn from the material towards a higher spiritual life, we find that these evil impressions stand in the way of our progress. Then comes the struggle to free ourselves from them. † Herein we find the idea that we must all work for our freedom and happiness. When we pursue the evil things of the world, we are seeking the same ideal, though unconsciously. Through bitter experience we find that these give us neither freedom nor happiness. We believe them to be "apostles" but

* At the earnest request of some students of the Vedanta Society of Portland Oregon, U.S.A., to explain the Christian Bible, the Swami has taken up "The Revelation of St. John the Divine"—the last and the most misunderstood book of the New Testament—for his Thursday meditation class. His interpretation of the "Revelation" the Greek word for which is *Apocalypse*, has created a keen interest among the students and will, we hope, be of interest to our readers,—Ed.V,K.

† Rev. 2 : 2.

after repeated disappointments we at last awaken to their real nature and realize that they can never give us that which we are seeking. In spite of discouragement however, we never lose hope of ultimately reaching the ideal.* Forced onward by an irresistible urge, which we perhaps do not understand, but which is stronger than life itself we keep on seeking to realize that ideal of freedom and bliss which, is to be found only in God.

Now the *Muladhar Chakra* lies at the base of the spinal cord and is directly related to the *Sahasrara* or the highest center in the brain, wherein is said to be existing the Paramashiva—the Supreme Lord. The *Kundalini*—the coiled up energy—which is also spoken of in mystical language as the Divine Mother, is in the *Muladhar* or lowest center. Her real place is in the *Sahasrara* where her Lord, the Supreme, resides. The object of the whole process is to release this coiled up energy which will then arise to the center in the brain. The tasks of regeneration will then be complete. The first step toward regeneration or the attainment of freedom is to “remember” the real nature of the self and “repent”.†

[The word “repent” is translated from the Greek word *metonia*. It is found many times in the New Testament and literally means “changing the mind”.]

This is quite different from the ordinary conception of the meaning of the word entertained by the modern Christian world. In Vedanta, we are taught that to brood over our mistakes is futile. Evil is conquered by good not being merely sorry for the evil. This is also the real teaching of the New Testament. *Change the mind*. Think on the positive ideal. Change the mode of thought. Think constructive thoughts, rejecting all that are destructive. Instead of dwelling on this transitory existence place the mind on the Immortal, the Everlasting Spirit. ‡ It does not mean here literally, that the candlestick will be removed or that the church or center will become non-existent but that, unless we truly struggle towards the higher life—make a real effort at self-regeneration—the centers will become as though non-existent to us.

Ordinarily the face of the *Kundalini* or Serpent Power which is in the *Muladhar Chakra* is upward; but in those persons who

* Rev. 2 : 3

† Rev. 2 : 4

‡ Rev. 2 : 5

are vile and wicked for whom it will take many lives or even a whole cycle to awaken); the face of the serpent is downward. In ordinary individuals the quality of this *Chakra* retains somewhat of that higher love and is therefore more or less averse to sensuality. Though many are sensual, there are very few who love the grosser forms of sensualism. *

[The Nicolaitans were a pseudo occult sect, given up to the grossest forms of sensuality, practising Phallic sorcery with the "consecrated women" of the temples in its most unclean form.]

The reward to the conqueror of this first center is "to eat of the tree of life." He attains to the memory of the past incarnations of his life.

cf. Patanjali's Yoga Aphorisms:—We know our past incarnations by *Sam-yama* or concentration on the *Samskaras* or the sub-conscious mind.

"And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write;" Smyrna stands for the *Swadhisthan Chakra* which is situated at the root of the genitals. Here is sounded the warning of the temptations. After the *Kundalini* is roused from the first center, all our subconscious impressions of the past, both good and evil, are released. They appear before us and battle for supremacy. These are very real temptations. They are the things which were wont to give us pleasure and though now, wiser grown, we would shun them as evil, at times they appear to us in the guise of good and unless we practise discrimination we will fall into the snare once more. †

[The word 'Jew' is used in the Apocalypse in its Kabalistic sense; "The stone becomes a plant, the plant an animal, the animal a man, the man a Jew and the Jew a God."]

In studying the lives of Christ, Buddha or other great sages and teachers we find they all met and conquered these same temptations—impressions or *Samskaras* of the past. It is good to know that such trials, though terrific at the time do not last long. There is nothing to fear; ultimately, we too will gain the victory. In crude mythological language these temptations are represented as the temptations of Satan or Mara (the Satan of the Buddhists). In actuality, Satan is not a separate entity. He is within ourselves—is our own mind—wherein are stored all past memories. The inner teachings of Vedanta represent this Satan as the *Papa Purusha* or

the sinful man within. Those who have studied the life of Sri Ramakrishna know how he told of his own experience with this *Papa Purusha*. He said that this sinful man of dark complexion came out of his own body and a white luminous body came out also and he watched the battle between the two, and the ultimate victory in which the dark man was killed. The reward to the conqueror of this center is conscious immortality. "He that overcometh shall not be hurt in the second death."

To be continued.

THE HINDU VIEW OF LIFE *

By Swami Vedantananda.

This handy little book contains a series of four illuminating lectures delivered last year by Prof. Radhakrishnan under the Upton Foundation at the Manchester College, Oxford. It embodies an admirable defence and interpretation of Hindu culture in both its ideal and practical aspects. In the first lecture on "Religious Experience" the learned Professor ably points out that the Hindu ideal of religion is the direct experience of the highest Truth, to be realised by subordinating intellect to intuition and dogma to inward realisation. He rightly says that according to the Hindu, "religion is not the acceptance of academic abstractions or celebration of ceremonies but a kind of life or experience. It is insight into the nature of reality (*darsana*), or experience of reality (*anubhava*)."

And this "religious experience is of a self-certifying character. It is *Svatassiddha*. It carries its own credentials."

In his second lecture on "Conflict of Religions" the author speaks of the attitude of "comprehensive charity with which Hinduism regards other religions. "Hinduism," he observes, "is wholly free from the strange obsession of the Semetic faiths that the acceptance of a particular religious metaphysics is necessary for salvation, and non-acceptance thereof is a heinous sin meriting eternal punishment in hell."

In the third and fourth lectures on "Hindu Dharma" he presents the practical side of Hinduism, the life and conduct that

* By Prof S. Radhakrishnan, King George V Professor of Philosophy, Calcutta University. Published by Messrs George Allen and Unwin Ltd., Ruskin House, 40 Museum Street, London, W. C. 1. Pp 33. Price 5s.

leads to spiritual realisation. He describes the four stages of life ending in that of the Sannyasins who "embody in their own spirit the freedom of the world, take on the wideness of the whole earth, dwell in love and walk in righteousness." He further points out the "democratic" principles underlying the institution of caste according to which "each racial group should be allowed to develop the best in it without impeding the progress of others."

The task of the exponent of Hindu culture is not only to interpret but also to defend it against the attacks of unjust critics. To the oft-repeated charge that Hinduism is nothing but a baffling diversity of forms and ceremonies the Professor replies— "Every tradition which helps man to lift his soul to God is held up as worthy of adherence . . . Hinduism is therefore not a definite dogmatic creed, but a vast, complex, but subtly unified mass of spiritual thought and realisation." Some people take Hinduism to be a jumble of polytheism, monotheism and monism. This is a wrong view. The truth is, as the Professor observes, that "Hinduism accepts all religious notions as facts and arranges them in the order of their more or less intrinsic significance. Hinduism insists on our working steadily upward and improving our knowledge of God. 'The worshippers of the Absolute are the highest in rank; second to them are the worshippers of the personal God; then come the worshippers of the incarnations like Rama, Krishna, Buddha; below them are those who worship ancestors, deities and sages, and lowest of all are the worshippers of the petty forces and spirits,'"

Hinduism is said to be a non-missionary religion. This is not correct. Hinduism possesses a tremendous power of assimilation. "Only," as the author points out, "its missionary spirit is different from that associated with the proselytising creeds. It did not regard it as its mission to convert humanity to any one opinion: For what counts is conduct and not belief. Worshippers of different gods and followers of different rites were taken into the Hindu fold. . . . The ancient practice of Vratyastoma, described fully in the *Tandya Brahmana*, shows that not only individuals but whole tribes were absorbed into Hinduism."

Prof. Radhakrishnan clearly points out that the much misunderstood Law of Karma does not imply fatalism and a denial of human freedom. "The principle of Karma reckons with the material or the context in which each individual is born. While it regards the past as determined, it allows that the future is only

conditioned. The spiritual element in man allows him freedom within the limits of his nature. . . . The Law of Karma encourages the sinner that it is never too late to mend. It does not shut the gates of hope against despair and suffering, guilt and peril."

To the charge that the Hindu idea of divine immanence cuts at the very roots of ethics, the Professor very ably replies—"The Hindu view rebels against the cold and formal conception of God Who is external to the world, and altogether remote and transcendent. . . . The indwelling of God in the universe does not mean the identity of God with the universe. . . . Hindu thought takes care to emphasise the transcendent character of the Supreme. 'He bears the world but by no means lost in it.'"

His defence of the Hindu ideal of womanhood is illuminating. The Hindu social system advocates greater control in the case of women than of men, but this has its own reasons as the author points out—"While man is expected to take to the worldly pursuits (yajna-pradhanya), woman is capable of great heights of self-control and self-denial (tapa-pradhanya). The stricter code of morality applied to women is really a compliment to them, for it accepts the natural superiority of the women. But the modern woman, if I may say so, is losing her self-respect. She does not respect her individuality and uniqueness, but is paying an unconscious tribute to man by trying to imitate him. She is fast becoming masculine and mechanical. Adventurous pursuits are leading her into conflict with her own inner nature."

Professor Radhakrishnan has also tried to remove the misunderstanding about the doctrine of Maya, which according to some, "is supposed to repudiate the reality of the world and make all ethical relations meaningless." But unfortunately he does it in a somewhat faltering manner. Nay he himself seems to be confused by Maya. He is quite right when he says—"Sankara repudiates the subjectivism of Vijnanavadins and affirms the extramental reality of objects. . . . Sankara distinguishes dream from the waking experience and warns us against a confusion between the two" But it will not do for the Professor to forget that the great teacher of the Vedanta allows to the world only a relative but not an absolute existence. From one standpoint the man of knowledge sees the mirage of the world as a mirage and is not tempted by it. But this mirage vanishes away and the thing-in-itself is revealed when he takes a different point of view. Then there arises the question not of "re-interpretation" but of actual

denial of the phenomena. Sankara is very clear on the point when he says—"Scriptural passages declare that for him who sees that everything has its Self in Brahman the whole phenomenal world with its actions, agents, and results of actions is non-existent. Nor can it be said that this non-existence of the Phenomenal world is declared (by Scripture) to be limited to certain states; for the passage 'Thou art That' shows that the general fact of Brahman being the Self of all is not limited by any particular state. Moreover, Scripture declares that unity is the one true existence while manifoldness is evolved out of wrong knowledge." Thus from the standpoint of the highest knowledge Sankara denies not only the independence but even the very existence of the world, as the world. This denial of the phenomenon implies the affirmation of the noumenon or Brahman. If he asks us, as the Professor says, "to hold fast both ends"—God and the world, he does so because "so long as a person has not reached the true knowledge of the unity of the Self, it does not enter his mind that the world of effects with its means and objects of right knowledge and its results of actions is untrue." It has become a fashion with a certain class of our philosophical writers to quote stray passages from the utterings of Sankara and to interpret his monism in a non-monistic way. It is unfortunate that the author of the "Hindu View of life" also has taken this mistaken view.

Prof. Radhakrishnan's theory of liberation lacks the clearness and strength of realisation. It is even more unsatisfactory than his interpretation of the doctrine of the Maya. "When one individual," he observes, "completes his purpose, he develops the universality of outlook characteristic of perfection, but retains his individuality as a centre of action. When the whole universe reaches its consummation, the liberated individuals lapse into the stillness of the Absolute." He seems to be afraid of this supposed loss of individuality in the "absolute stillness" of Moksha. And he wants even the liberated souls to retain their individualities so long as the world process goes on. From the "relative" standpoint the world continues to exist either in the manifest or unmanifest state. So the argument—no cessation of the world process, no liberation—cannot be easily set aside even on the plea of what the Professor calls "a frustration of the purpose of God." Prof. Radhakrishnan's theory of Sarvamukti or the liberation of all at the same time appears to be influenced by the pet ideas of some of the modern speculative philosophers of the West. The Jivanmuktas (emancipated souls, so long as they live in the body) certainly try to do

good to mankind out of the fullness of their heart. But that is no reason why they should all be detained until all others obtain to the same state. Whatever may be its "pragmatic" value, the theory is not supported by any recognised Vedantic philosopher, who, on the other hand, holds that it is not given to every soul to be an Adhikarika Purusha—one who retains his individuality even after attaining to the highest knowledge, being entrusted with the special mission of helping the world.

As compared to Prof. Radhakrishnan's conception of liberation that of Swami Vivekananda is more satisfactory and authoritative. The Swami who speaks from direct knowledge, describes the state of perfection not as "a condition of absolute stillness, stagnation, death," but as a positive state of existence, intelligence and bliss. He says, "what becomes of a man when he attains perfection? He lives a life of bliss infinite. He enjoys infinite and perfect bliss, having obtained the only thing in which man ought to have pleasure, namely God, and enjoys the bliss of God. . . . We have often and often read this called the losing of individuality and becoming a stock or stone. I tell you it is nothing of the kind. If it is happiness to enjoy the consciousness of this small body, it must be greater happiness to enjoy the consciousness of two bodies, the measure of happiness increasing with the consciousness of increasing number of bodies, the aim, the ultimate of happiness being reached when it would become a universal consciousness. Therefore to gain this infinite universal individuality this miserable little prison-individuality must go. Then alone can death cease when I am one with life; then alone can misery cease when I am one with happiness itself; then alone can all errors cease when I am one with knowledge itself."

The Swami describes the state of perfection not from an intellectual study but from spiritual experience. Throughout his lectures and writings he "presents the Hindu culture, its philosophy and religion, as he realised them in his own life. And the message of the Swami is steadily spreading itself more and more both in the East and the West. Rightly does Sir John Woodroffe observe—"It is only as time goes on that the figure of the courageous Vivekananda stands forth in the true measure of his greatness. To the great Believers and Sadhakas the first rank is accorded, but there is room and a great present demand for those who like Professor Radhakrishnan can speak as philosophers to those Europeans who are themselves philosophers or for whom philosophy has an interest. For such the Professor has the advan-

tage of possessing an Indian Sangskara which enables him to understand, and knowledge of both Sanskrit and Indian philosophy on the one hand and European philosophy on the other presented in good clear English speech."

The lectures have been printed as they were delivered. But at places the Sanskrit passages quoted are not apt, and the translations of Sanskrit words and phrases are not accurate. Prof. Radhakrishnan seems to be original with a vengeance in some of his views which he may not find possible to substantiate. The book ought to have been carefully edited with the help of a Sanskrit scholar before its publication.

The work is very timely and deserves wide circulation. We have read it with great pleasure and heartily commend it to our readers.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

Mahatma Gandhi on Sister Nivedita.

In Mahatma Gandhi's story of "My Experiments with Truth" there appeared unfortunately certain inaccurate remarks on Sister Nivedita,—which came as a surprise to her innumerable admirers and especially to those who knew her intimately. Our comment on the above remarks was published in the June issue of the *Vedanta Kesari*. The *Modern Review* also tried to correct Mahatma Gandhi's wrong impression about the Sister, and gave a brief estimate of her real nature in its last May number. This having come to his notice, Mahatma Gandhi has frankly acknowledged his limitation of knowledge about the illustrious Sister. Such a frank confession indeed befits a man of his greatness. We reproduce below what he wrote in the *Young India* of the 30th June, 1927—

The *Modern Review* has a paragraph on what occurs in the story of *My Experiments with Truth*, chapter 19, Part III, on Sister Nivedita. After quoting my remarks, the *Modern Review* has :

"The mention of "the splendour that surrounded her," without any other details conveys a wrong idea of Sister Nivedita's mode of living. The fact is, at the time when Mr. Gandhi saw her, she was the guest of Mrs. Ole Bull and Miss Josephine Macleod at the American Consulate, and, as such, was not responsible for the 'splendour'. Her ascetic and very simple style of living in a

tumble-down house in Bosepara Lane, Baghbazar, is well-known to her friends and acquaintances.

"We do not know, whether Mr. Gokhale spoke to Mr. Gandhi in English and actually used the word 'Volatile' to describe her ; for what has appeared in *Young India* is translated from the Gujarati *Navajivan*. But whoever may be responsible for the use of the word 'Volatile' has wronged her memory. Sister Nivedita had her defects, as in fact even the greatest of mankind had and have, but volatile she was not, in any sense of that word. As English is not our Vernacular, we have consulted two dictionaries on our table to find out its exact meaning as applied to human beings. The Pocket Oxford Dictionary defines it to men 'of gay temperament, mercurial' In Webster's New International Dictionary the explanation given is 'light hearted; airy; lively; hence, changeable; fickle.' Sister Nivedita was a very serious-minded person, noted for her constancy and steadfast devotion to the cause of Hinduism and India.

"The reference to 'her overflowing love for Hinduism is quite just and accurate."

I gladly reproduce this correction, For I never knew the fact, till I saw the note in the *Modern Review* that I had met the deceased not at her own place but at a guest's. The reader has to recognise my painful limitations. My reading is so poor that I have not read, much though I should like to have, the lives even of those who have contributed to the making of Modern India. My only consolation is, that the poverty of my reading is not due to laziness on my part, but a life of ceaseless action and full of tempest from the early youth left no time for much reading. Whether on the whole I have lost or gained thereby is to me a debatable question. But if it is a gain, it has been achieved in spite of myself. I can therefore claim no credit for it. And if in the story that I am writing from week to week, I deal with men and women, I do so only in so far as such reference is necessary for showing the working of my mind, so far as I can in my search for Truth. I am therefore leaving out innumerable instances in life, which would be certainly otherwise interesting, as also references to several men and women. And it will be unjust to those whom I am obliged to refer in the story and to me, if the reader concludes, that the estimate that I may give about persons is my final statement or true in fact. Such references should be regarded merely as the

impression left upon my mind at the time to which they may relate. I introduced Sister Nivedita, Sami Vivekananda, Maharshi Devendranath and others in the story simply to illustrate the point, that even then my political work in South Africa was an integral part of that search, which was never once subordinated to the political work. It has therefore given me pleasure to reproduce the paragraph in the *Modern Review* at the very first opportunity after reading it.

As to the use of the word 'Volatile.' Though the translation is not mine, I cannot dissociate myself from its use, because as a rule I revise these translations, and I remember having discussed the adjective with Mahadev Desai. We both had doubts about the use of the adjective being correct. The choice lay between volatile, Volent and fanatical. The last two were considered to be too strong. Mahadev had chosen Volatile and I passed it. But neither he nor I had the dictionary meaning in view.

What word Gokhale used I can not recall. The word used in the original writing is *tej*. I have a full recollection of the conversation between Sister Nivedita and myself. But I do not propose to describe it. No fault in the translation or the original can possibly damage the memory of one who loved Hinduism and India so well. It will ever be cherished with gratefulness.

THE INDIAN CHURCH BILL

The British House of Lords has passed the second reading of the Indian Church Bill. The Bill is intended "to provide for the dissolution of the legal union between the Church of England and the Church of England in India." Its object is thus to secure autonomy for the Indian Church by making it a voluntary association legally entitled to manage its own affairs like other churches of the same communion in the Self-Governing Dominions, the United States, China and Japan.

But the freedom proposed to be granted is limited. The Indian Church is to be a communion with the Church of England.

The Indian Government will continue its present practice of maintaining a number of Anglican Chaplains and Churches. But in the interest of the members of the Church of England temporarily resident in India, particularly the military and the civilians, the service to be conducted in these churches shall be similar to that in use in the Church of England. The Bill also provides that if

the Indian Church ceases at any time to be in communion with the Church of England, the Governor-General of India in Council shall be at liberty to resume complete control over the churches maintained by it.

The Bill may satisfy a large number of Indian Christians who hope to enjoy some autonomy in their Church Government. But the majority of the members of the official and unofficial European and Anglo-Indian community seem to be very suspicious about it.

Evidently to disarm Indian opposition Lord Birkenhead very cleverly remarked that the Bill would be welcomed not only by the Indian Christians but also by all Indians generally, "having regard to the appreciation Indians attached to the spiritual as distinct from the material side of life." But what is the real attitude of the vast non-Christian community in India who have to bear the main burden of the Ecclesiastical Department of the Indian Government?

It is a pity that Indian journalists and leaders are not paying the necessary attention to the Bill. Many of them naturally feel that all opposition will be futile and the Government will do whatever it pleases in the matter. But still in the name of justice and equity vigorous protests should be made against the Bill by which both the British and Indian Governments propose to perpetuate a great wrong only in a different legalised form and under a slightly different name.

India's conception of spirituality so diplomatically referred to by Lord Birkenhead demands that no particular church, whether it is called Anglican or Indian, should be maintained at the expense of a vast majority of people professing faiths other than Christianity. When the Indian Church measure comes into force, the salaries of the bishops and archdeacons will no longer be borne by the Indian Government. This is only a very small relief. The poor non-Christian tax-payer should be completely freed from the heavy burden of maintaining a proselytising church ever ready to undermine the ancestral faith of those who are being made to support it at present. Anglican Christianity is not the State religion of India. As such there is absolutely no justification on the part of the Indian Government in maintaining the Anglican Church in India, even on the plea of fulfilling its so-called "historic obligations" towards its military and civil servants belonging to the Church of England. Let the Anglican community in India and the Church of England maintain the Anglican Churches and chaplains if they

want them. Strict religious neutrality demands that no particular religion or denomination should enjoy the special favour of the State. What is needed, therefore, is not an Indian Church Bill, but a Bill for the disestablishment and disendowment of the Anglican Church in India. No Christian church should any longer draw upon the meagre resources of India for its support.

There is another side to the question. The Indian Church to be truly Indian should heartily sympathise with the national aspirations of the Indian people. Besides, it must imbibe the universal spirit of Indian culture, and work along with other religions and creeds for the all-round well being of all communities. This will be possible only when it ceases to be a foreign organisation, and is fully relieved of "the continued pressure of the dead weight of the State connection on the episcopal and clerical mind," as Mr. C. F. Andrews put it. It is for the Indian Christians to decide whether or not they should try to free the soul of the Indian Church from the domination of Government, and make it a living force. Let them not forget that the words of their Prophet,—“For what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?”—are as true of individuals as of the Church.

THE TWO DANGERS BEFORE ISLAM

‘It is perfectly comic,’ writes “A Mohammadan Indian” in the *Indus*, ‘how a person whose, perhaps, father became a Mussalman, or quite possible who has himself just embraced Islam, waxes eloquent about “our great Muslim culture,” “our great Muslim brotherhood.” The whole position is entirely false, utterly impossible.’ Yet there are many among the Indian Mussalmans who are trying to make the impossible possible!

It is indeed amusing to see how a “raw” convert into Islam disclaims all his ancient heritage, and tries to trace his descent directly from Mohammad himself. And further, he comes to look upon his Hindu brethren as “Kaffirs,” and even thinks of earning some religious merit by getting these “Kaffirs” converted into Islam. This fanatical spirit is being bred among the Mussalman masses not only by the ignorant Mullas and Maulanas, but even by the most learned among them.

In a recent speech delivered at Akola, Maulana Mahammad Ali is reported to have said that he considered that his religion was the only true religion in the world, and he hoped that a day would come when not only Hindus but others also would embrace

Islam. Here, too, we see an illustration of hoping for the impossible. However, to the credit of the Maulana it must be said that he urged his co-religionists to purify and correct themselves and act according to the injunctions of Islam. But there are thousands of Moslem priests who do not put any stress on leading a better religious life. On the other hand they only tend to call up the worst passions in the masses in the fair name of religion. These unscrupulous religious propagandists are rousing the fanaticism of the ignorant Mussalmans to such an extent that many among them would like to increase their fold by tricks and force, even by abducting Hindu women and children. It is the urgent duty of thoughtful Mussalmans to put a stop to this dangerous tendency among their ignorant co-religionists, which otherwise will ultimately lead to the degeneration of their community.

Besides fanaticism, extra-territorial patriotism is another grave danger that faces the Indian Mohammadans to-day. It was very much encouraged by the ill-fated Khilafat movement which, contrary to the expectations of Mahatma Gandhi, increased the breach between the Hindus and Mussalmans in India. It took the spirit of "Moslem brotherhood" to such a ludicrous extent that Indian Mussalmans became practically oblivious to the miseries of even their co-religionists at home. During devastating floods and famines, Hindu organisations were trying to alleviate the distress of the sufferers the majority of whom were sometimes Mussalmans. The relief works were badly suffering from want of funds. But still vast sums of money were being collected by the Mohammadan leaders and sent abroad for supporting wars in Islamic countries. With a deep pathos does the Mussalman writer observe—"We Mussalmans, may be callously indifferent to the gravest events at home, but every gentle restle of leaves in far-off Turkey or Africa is accompanied by the wildest and most unnatural breaking of our dear, sympathetic hearts. Millions of our own poor countrymen are dying of exposure and starvation. We cannot clothe or feed them; we are too poor. But we can afford to send millions of rupees to support wars in distant lands in which we have no interest except that they concern some people, who also happen to call themselves Mussalmans. Such is our whole-hearted generosity that we do not even mind not getting simple thanks for the "widow's mite" we can so ill afford. Our co-religionists' affection for us is so deep and sincere, that they cannot bear to go through the futile and awkward formality of displaying their gratitude in any way; they content themselves with just feeling it! This is the most

remarkable part of the whole heart breaking business. No one can fail to observe that this great "Muslim brotherhood" exists only for us, Indian Mussalmans. No one else has a notion of it. Turkey may go to dogs, but the fact does not trouble either the Moroceans, or the Egyptians, or the Persians, or the Afghans, or anyone else. Yet our Indian Mussalmans butt in and "kick up an infernal row." We wish the Indian Muslim leaders would ponder over these thoughts and find that a change in their mentality will do good not only to the community but also to the country.

SLACKENING OF RELIGIOUS FERVOUR IN ENGLAND

From his personal experience of England, Prof. J. Takakusu makes some very interesting observations in the *Young East* regarding the attendance in churches on Sundays. During his student days, more than thirty years ago, the Professor used to attend church services on Sundays (rather reluctantly, he points out) because he had no other way of spending the Sabbath. He has visited Europe four times, after finishing his studies, and every time he used to attend the churches on Sundays. His opinion is "that within the past twenty or thirty years Europe has gone through a great, even a sweeping, change in the domain of thought."

His remarks about the conditions in England then and now have special significance. More than thirty years ago when he first visited England as a student, no boarding house, he says, would tolerate a student who would stay at home and continue his studies on Sunday. No sports or other amusements were available in those days. It was under such circumstances that the Professor was obliged to attend the church services on Sundays. And he observes that "in those days, every church was filled to capacity and the sentiment of the people at large towards the church was exceedingly reverential. I also found missionary zeal to be very intense, the popular sympathy for heathens being of such depth that many earnest young men and women went out as missionaries in pagan countries and money was always liberally given for their support."

Before the Russo-Japanese war, it was one of the cherished objects of the English Christians to convert the whole of the Japanese people to Christianity in fifty years. But when Japan came out victorious in the war, the proselytising zeal was almost completely damped and the missionaries came to hold that it was a waste of both labour and money to try to propagate Christianity

among the Japanese people. The Professor thinks that this was due to the fact that the Japanese professed an advanced form of Buddhism as their religion. Whatever may be the cause there is no doubt that political and other considerations must have contributed very largely to this change in the angle of vision. The religion of the people of India is in no way less evolved than that of the Japanese and yet the missionary zeal in India has not diminished very much. The truth seems to be that Christian missionaries find a congenial soil for their work in countries which are politically weak or under foreign domination.

Prof. Takakusu finds a great slackening in the religious enthusiasm of the English people after the Great War, and as its result there is a tremendous fall in church attendance. He observes, 'On my last visit to England, I was amazed to find church attendance so poor that it appeared to have dwindled to one-tenth of that of the pre-war days. Lest I might fall into error in my judgment, I visited a goodly number of churches and those of different denominations. Not only that, I inspected conditions prevailing in churches and chapels in cities as well as in the country. It was the same everywhere.'

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

Gods in Exile—By J. J. Van Der Lecuw. Published by The Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras, Pp. 129.

This little book is divided into five chapters—all dealing with ontological questions. The author in his foreword states that the contents of the book are based upon the "awakening of Ego-consciousness which came to *him* some little time ago".

The Gods in exile, as can be seen from a perusal of the book, are none other than the human souls which have strayed away from the "World of the Divine," which is their true Home. These souls are undergoing misery in this world owing to their identification with their "three bodies viz, the physical body, the body of emotions and the body of thought," and their salvation is in their disentanglement from them and using them as willing instruments. This disentanglement, to use the language of philosophers, is transcending all limitations, is going beyond time, space and causation. When the lower self which finds itself enmeshed in the gross, subtle and causal bodies is sublimated into the higher self, and when the man attains his true nature by thus transcending these limitations he is said to attain salvation or perfection. The author's statement that salvation or perfection "can never be individual" is therefore inexplicable, and is likely to discourage and mislead truly religious aspirants.

In the state of perfection there can be no activity; for all activity presupposes imperfection and the author's attempt to propound that the Ego after attaining his perfection or ego-cons-

business (as the author would designate it) has "his own radiantly beautiful appearance expressing his mission or genius in the great work of God" is unphilosophical and incompatible with the recorded ultimate experience of the Upanishadic seers.

While we do not venture to discredit the author with the, "awakening of Ego-consciousness which came to him some little time ago" we would wish that the philosophical terms such as self, Atma, perfection, Ego, etc. were used in such a way as to convey to the reader clear and precise ideas so as to enable him to fix the ideal.

The last chapter contains spiritual exercises of which we have little to say; but we leave it to the reader to judge for himself in the light of our remarks how far they will be of use to him.

Vedanta Vindicated—By Rev. J F, Pessein To be had of the author at Wellington, Nilgiris, South India. Pp. 156. Price 2-4.

The author claims to "have found out that Advaita (psychology excepted) not only is not antagonistic to Catholic philosophy but agrees wonderfully with it in all the most fundamental matters." And as such, he holds it does not deserve the scorn with which it is looked upon by the Christian missionary, but instead, "is worthy of high admiration."

The author is a Catholic priest. He has taken great pains to interpret Vedanta in the light of Scholastic doctrines, and to show thereby the underlying harmony between the two systems as he understands them. But his ultimate object is not so much to vindicate Vedanta as to strengthen the position of his Catholic philosophy. And this he makes a stepping stone for preaching his Catholic religion.

The author cleverly employs the usual tactics of the modern Christian propagandist. First, he tries to establish what he thinks to be the points of agreement with the Vedanta; and then he proceeds to expose what he thinks to be the errors of the Advaita system, which according to him "come chiefly from religion."

He quotes extensively from the writings of Sankaracharya. And to suit his own purpose he tortures the texts at many places. He brands the interpretations of Max Muller and Deussen as "wholly arbitrary and artificial." A study of Swami Vivekananda's Complete Works would have greatly helped him in a correct understanding of the monistic Vedanta. But unfortunately all that he knows of the Swami's teachings seems to have been derived from a few of his epistles. And his insufficient knowledge in this matter has proved to be "dangerous." He has completely misunderstood the passages quoted by him from these private letters of the Swami. It is, therefore, no wonder that he

sees in them nothing but "utter intellectual confusion, scepticism and despair," which we fear, are but reflections of his own mind.

We do not know why of all the systems of Hindu thought the author has tried to vindicate the Advaita philosophy alone. Whatever may be the cause, in the name of vindicating monistic Vedanta he has tried, though unconsciously, to undermine it. He has set up as monism, a fanciful system which, to say the least, is not the Vedanta as interpreted by Sankara.

The author's remarks on the Advaitic doctrine of the identity of the Jiva and Brahman is amusing. He says—"It is anti-patriotic. For, if there be only one universal Atman there is no room for the Foreigner." The proper place for this meaningless criticism would be under what the author calls "the nonsenses attributed to Advaita", some of which, however contains good sense although he fails to see it.

The book contains many misstatements about the Vedanta philosophy and religion. But still it is not without its value. Through its Scholastic interpretation it attempts to show that along with the points of difference, there are also some points of agreement between the Vedanta and the Catholic philosophy. As such, in spite of its many faults it will prove to be of interest to the students of comparative philosophy and religion.

Release—By C. Jinarajadasa. Published by Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras—pages 102. Price Re. 1.

The problem of pain and misery has been awaiting its solution from the earliest of times. In this small volume the author attempts to give in his rare style a new poetic interpretation of the paths that lead to salvation. 'Each plan of happiness which we make is in reality always subordinated to another plan, that of cosmic desire though in subtle ways it convinces us that its plan is ours too. It desires food and rest, and then it convinces us that we are hungry and tired; it desires excitement, and then, following its lead, we go in search of change.'

The author speaks of the tendency for divine unfoldment in every soul. But this tendency is defeated in its realisation as our 'natural self' puts on a second self which belongs not to us but to the craving; we do not know that when we think we are expressing our individuality, we are largely its puppets. 'In and through everything, his duality is mingled. . . . Release from the miseries of life begins only when we know this duality in us and refuse any longer to be the tool of what is not our true self.'

The chapters on 'Release by Law', 'Release by Light' and 'Liberation' form very agreeable reading. The birth of the Divine Child and Its message to the three Sisters give a homely touch and mystic significance to the writings of the author. The binding and get up are excellent.

NEWS AND REPORTS

LECTURES BY SWAMI VISWANANDA

Under the auspices of the 'Behar Youngmen's Institute,' Patna, Swami Viswananda, President, Sri Ramakrishna Ashram, Khar, Bombay recently delivered two interesting lectures, one on "The Message of Swami Vivekananda" and the other on "Universal Religion." The Swami gave two more addresses on 'Bhakti' and "The Message of Sri Ramakrishna" in the local Harisabha Hall and the Gait Library respectively. The lectures left a profound impression on the mind of the hearers.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAM, KHAR, BOMBAY

We have received with great pleasure a copy of the first general report of the Sri Ramakrishna Ashram, Khar, Bombay. It gives an interesting account of the growth and activities of the Ashram which was opened by Swami Sharvananda on the 19th of April 1923 in a rented building at Santa Cruz, Bombay at the instance of the prominent members of the Western India Vivekananda Society of the city. On the 9th April, 1927 this Society has been amalgamated with the Ramakrishna Ashram, showing thereby that the Ashram has justified its existence in the city of Bombay by its manifold activities for the last 4 years. The Ashram now possesses a permanent home of its own at Khar, where it shifted in November, 1925.

The report speaks of no less than 700 lectures delivered by the Mission Swamis on diverse religious topics in and round Bombay. Nor were the activities of the Ashram confined to the city and its suburbs alone. The members of the Ashram also carried the Message of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna to Poona, Kolhapur and Ahmedabad and other places in the presidency. A charitable dispensary was opened by the Ashram in May 1924. And the report adds that 200 patients are being treated there every month. A picture of this steadily growing dispensary has been printed on the cover of the report.

In June 1926 another step was taken by the Ashram in opening a free school for the poorer classes of the locality, which has proved to be a very useful institution, the strength of which has doubled in the course of the last one year.

We fervently hope that the philanthropic public of Bombay will come forward with the necessary help, and enable the Ashram to expand its activities and carry on its labour of love with greater efficiency than at present,

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION HOME OF SERVICE, BENARES

We heartily welcome the Twenty-sixth Annual Report of the Benares Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service, which stands today as a noble monument of our National Spirit of organisation and service.

Of all the sacred cities of India, Benares may be said to have the largest number of indigent and helpless people. And the great work done by the Home of Service in that city during the year under report becomes evident on taking a cursory glance of the statistics given therein. The account of the results obtained in the In-door and Out-door departments surpasses all previous records. The In-door general hospital with its 108 beds treated 1,679 patients while no less than 22,325 persons were relieved by way of medical aid at the out-door dispensaries, by monthly and weekly doles of rice, money and clothing and other kinds of casual help. As the entries shewn the Savashram rendered service to persons belonging to almost all creeds and communities in India.

We are glad to learn also that year by year the activities of the Home have been increasing — so that besides its indoor and out door medical aid, it maintains seven other departments of relief. These are (a) Refuge for aged-men, (b) Refuge for women invalids, (c) Girls' Home, (d) Home for paralytic patients (e) Dharmasala for poor strangers, (f) Out door help to invalids and poor ladies of respectable families in money and kind and special casual help.

The report makes no exaggeration when it says that the Home has become a temple where the whole nation worships God through Man. 'His high emblem, and where philanthropy and charity are exalted into worship and communion with God.' It has been so testified to by men like Mr. Mirza M. Ismail, the present Dewan of Mysore, Mr. M. H. Syed of the University of Allahabad, Dr. M. Keshava Pai of Madras, Rev Dr. Stanley Jones and others.

Such a Home deserves help and more help, and we earnestly hope that the public will heartily support it with liberal subscriptions and donations.

All contributions and correspondence with the reference to endowments for the building of wards, etc., should be sent to the Hony. Asst. Secretary, R. K. Mission Home of Service, Laksha, Benares City.

THE VEDANTA KESARI

"Let the lion of Vedanta roar."

"Let me tell you, strength is what we want
And the first step in getting strength is to uphold
The Upanishads and believe that 'I am the Atman.'"

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

VOLUME XIV] SEPTEMBER 1927

[NUMBER 5

PRAYER.

न मंत्रं नै यंत्रं तदपि च न जाने इतिमहो
न चाह्वानं ध्यानं तदपि च न जाने स्तुतिकथाः ।
न जाने मुद्रास्ते तदपि च न जाने विलपनं
परं जाने मातस्त्ववनुसरणं कृष्णहरणम् ॥
न मोक्षस्याकांक्षा न च विभवबांछापि च न मे
न विज्ञानपेक्षा शक्तिमुखि सुखेच्छापि न पुनः ।
अतस्त्वां संयाचे जननि जननं यातु मम वै
महानी रुद्राणी शिवशिव भवानीति जपतः ॥

O Mother ! I do not know Thy sacred hymns,
nor the ways of Thy worship ; nor how to invoke and
meditate upon Thee, nor how to pray to Thee. Nor do
I know the rituals of Thy worship, nor how to lay before
Thee my griefs. But this I know that to follow Thee is
to remove all my sufferings.

No desire have I for liberation, nor hankering after
wealth ; nor wish for knowledge, nor yearning for
happiness. O Mother ! This only I beg of Thee—May
my life pass in repetition of Thy and the Lord's holy
names.

SANKARA.

SPIRITUAL TALKS OF SWAMI BRAHMANANDA.*

Puri, Sashi Niketana.

Dear A.—,

Received your letter and also B'S. His motive is not clear. He does not wish to marry. He wants to serve the country. It is all right. It appears to me that it is all due to want of assimilation of the Western education. I do not know how far it is possible to serve others and the country before one's character is well formed. My belief is that the man who cannot solve his own problem will not be able to be of much use to others. Anyhow the boy is good. If he leads a pure life, he may get a taste for higher life.

Sri Ramakrishna used to say : " Fix thy hold firmly on God and do thou perform thy wordly duties, and, thou shalt be free from all dangers." Then again he said : " In the play of hide-and-seek, if the player succeeds in touching the grand-dame (Boori), he is no longer liable to be made a 'thief' of by the seeker. Similarly by once seeing God we are no longer bound down by the fetters of the world," You should always bear in mind that the goal of life is to realise God. First of all know Him; and let your faith and devotion to His feet become strong. Then you may do whatever work you wish to do. And as long as you live some sort of work or other you will have to do. When you have no difficulties for your maintenance or that of your family and have all kinds of convenience, you will be doing something or other either for the sake of your body or impelled by your ego or past Samskaras. Therefore when you cannot but do works it is better to

* Finding a few letters of the Swami containing many rare hints to spiritual practices, we incorporate them in the "Spiritual Talks". We hope, these will be of immense practical value to our readers.—Ed. V. K.

do such things as would bring peace to your mind and benefit to others. Those who have taken shelter under His feet and obtained His grace never go wrong. Every word spoken by them, every act done by them lead to the good of humanity.

It is good to remain unmarried. Those who keep Brahmacharya gain extra-ordinary powers. And only through such men do supernatural or divine powers manifest themselves. Sri Ramakrishna used to say, "The heart of the devotee is God's drawing room." If we wish to become His devotees and servants we must become pure; for only in pure hearts can He reside. He is far beyond the reach of the impure. When your mind and heart become as pure as glass without stain, then only God can reside in you and you can claim to be His servant, devotee, dependent or child. Just as a bright clear mirror gives a good reflection of the face, so does a pure heart manifest Him truly. So I tell you who are young and free from all taints to instal Him in your heart, and thereby allow no room for other things to enter. It is not possible to know Him except through pure and holy living. In this life you must realise Him by this means.

The boy is good and has some auspicious marks on him. He can make spiritual progress if he perseveres. To get the B.A. or M.A. degree or to become a barrister and make some money is not a very high ideal of life, and this gives but a temporary enjoyment. It will not help one to attain God, the goal of human life. First of all form your character and make it perfect. Then whatever you may undertake, you may easily accomplish. If for studying religious books you can spend even one-twelfth of the time wasted in preparing for your B.A. or M.A. degree, you can derive many thoughts and ideas of the higher life. Students generally complain that they have no time when they are

asked to read the sacred books. My dear boy, if you wish to become a man and live in eternal happiness, plunge yourself in deep meditation and resolve to realise Him or die in the attempt.

I do not want anybody to become a fool. Fools cannot understand religion. Those who want worldly enjoyment let them become B.As. and M.As. But those who care only for Supreme Bliss no university degrees are necessary. Sri Ramakrishna used to speak of Granthas (books) as Granthis (knots). This does not, of course, include the Sastras, Swamiji's works, etc. Reading purely secular books makes people more vain, excites evil propensities in them and takes them far away from God. Any book which does not induce devotion and faith in God, however entertaining for the time being, will ultimately cause misery. The egotism arising from B.A., M.A., etc., drags one very far away from God. The possession of wealth also works a similar mischief. Money does more harm than good.

Neither in the sleeping nor waking state could Sri Ramakrishna touch a coin. What he has taught us all by his own life is that there is no other path to attain God but through Tyaga (renunciation). By running after sense enjoyments, man becomes degraded to the level of the brute. If you want to be a man, practise renunciation and love and realise Him. Renouncing momentary pleasures befits you for the Supreme Happiness. And by renunciation it is meant that by giving up all sense pleasures of this life you should take shelter at the lotus feet of the Lord and become mad with His love and devotion. Look at the life of Sri Ramakrishna and be a man in the best sense of the term.

Renunciation alone can give you peace. Renounce all for His sake and make God your own and pray to

Him: "Thou art my father, Thou art my mother, Thou art my brother, Thou art my sister and Thou art my all." When giving up all thoughts of the enjoyments of this life you are able to pass day and night incessantly in His thought and prayer, you will feel infinite joy and become a man. What that joy is cannot be conveyed through words. In a word the human heart is too small to hold it. In such a state His grace, His love and His presence will always be felt by you.

EDITORIAL NOTES

Mendacious Propaganda against India

An organised propaganda of darkest lies and abominable calumny is being carried on for a long time in the West against the Indian people. Men and women of India as a whole are being made the object of the most grotesque misrepresentation and indiscriminate vilification, and lowered in the eyes of the Western people. Through the irony of fate the proud children of this ancient land lie prostrate to-day. And it is their helpless condition that emboldens the unscrupulous foreign calumniators to continue with impunity their unholy campaign on an extensive scale. A recent book entitled "Mother India" by one Miss Mayo—a cold-weather American tourist, containing the most wild generalisation and malignant condemnation of Indian culture and character, is being given a very wide publicity in the British and the American Press. The omniscient writer who seems to have a special attraction for the shocking and morbid aspects of human life, bases her preposterous conclusions on abnormal, hospital and criminal case reports and on her biassed observations of solitary happenings, maliciously charges the entire Indian people of physical degeneracy, sex perversity and moral depravity of various kinds. Her outrageous publication is now being used as a powerful weapon against India

in both England and America. But this scurrilous propaganda against India is by no means a new thing. And of all countries it is in America that the Indians, and particularly the Hindu's have been most vehemently maligned, and of all people it is the Christian missionaries who, with some honourable exceptions, have been most active in this campaign of deliberate denunciation of the Indian nation.

Libels against India

This wholesale indictment against the men and women of India is as old as the Christian missionary propaganda in the East. Even more than three decades back when Swami Vivekananda went to America to preach the message of the Vedanta, he was shocked and distressed to find how the missionaries of Christianity had spread all over the country the most malicious libels against the Indian people. The missionaries spoke of the supposed depravity of the entire body of Indians from the platform and the pulpit. Books were written on India depicting her inhabitants in the darkest colours. Part of the Sunday school education of the American children consisted in creating in their minds a hatred against non-Christians, specially the Hindus who were described as the "most horrible devils on earth." The Swami was pained to see that his countrymen were most mischievously represented to be a dark-skinned and semi-barbarous people who followed a religion of ghastly superstitions that could never produce a spiritual man, who indulged in child marriages, revelled in grossly immoral practices, ill-treated their women, killed their children, burnt their widows with their husbands, nay even killed themselves under the wheels of the car of Jagannath. The school books for boys and girls contained pictures of imaginary Hindu mothers throwing their children into the jaws of crocodiles in the Ganges, of huge cars crushing human beings under their wheels, of men

burning their wives at the stake with their own hands so that they might become ghosts and torment the husbands' enemies. Besides, the missionaries told the American people that Hindu widows were as a rule unchaste, that every village in India contained a pond full of bones of little babies, that Hindu fathers unable to marry their girls, married them to a god and encouraged them to lead a life of shame. These and other great "truths" were alleged to have been discovered by the missionaries everywhere in India. And they were proclaimed throughout the length and breadth of the American continent to men, women and children with a view to convince them of the necessity of supporting the Christian missions determined to save the soul of the Hindu "heathen" from eternal perdition.

Missionary Propaganda against the Swami

It was to proclaim the highest ideals of the Hindu religion and culture that Swami Vivekananda went to America. But along with this he had to perform the most unpleasant task of denouncing the gross and malicious libels showered upon the Hindu race by ignorant and bigoted missionaries and "Churchy" women of America. He boldly exposed the slanderers and their unholy methods of raising money for the foreign missions in India. The Swami's unique success and frank criticism created jealousy and heart burning in the missionary camps. Bigoted and unscrupulous Christian propagandists tried to injure his reputation. They abused and vilified him,—and went to the length of tempting him with women who were promised reward in case of success. But all these ignoble attempts were of no avail. Nay, the Christian missionary opposition, instead of thwarting, helped the spiritual mission of the Swami. He was acclaimed as a great prophet, seer and teacher by innumerable American men and women,

even by some of the most distinguished clergymen of the day. Besides, his activities affected the Christian propagandists financially. As the missionary report said, "Because of Vivekananda's success and teaching the contributions to the Indian missionary funds have decreased in one year by as much as one million pounds." This exasperated many of the low caste missionaries to such an extent that they were prepared to let their "soul go to hell itself" rather than let "this d—d Hindu", as some called the Swami, interfere with their work. They invented the blackest lies against him, and widely circulated them. Several times they addressed letters containing the most damaging calumnies against him to persons who had invited him as their guest. There were occasions when the Swami found the houses of his prospective hosts closed to him. But the malicious slanders were often detected, and the persons duped by the mischievous letters would make sincere apologies to the Swami, take him to their homes and be his most devoted friends and admirers. It is indeed unbelievable how the Swami who had deep reverence for Christ was continuously persecuted by those who posed to be the most devout of Christians.

The Swami's Attitude

These vicious slanders against the Swami's spotless character at times filled him with the bitterest indignation, and once he actually burst into tears while reading a baseless assertion, and cried out—"Oh! How deep is the wickedness of the world, and to what length men would go, in the name of religion, to cast aspersion upon another worker in God's vineyard!" About the slanders invented against him, the Swami wrote to an American friend—"I am astonished to hear the scandals the—circle are indulging about me. Don't you see that however a man may conduct himself, there will always be persons who will invent the blackest lies

about him. At Chicago I had such things spread every day against me . . . And these women are invariably the very Christians of Christians!" And to his Indian friends, who expressed great solicitude at these missionary attacks, he replied: "In future do not pay any heed to what people say either for or against me. . . . Truth is infinitely more weighty than untruth. . . . It is the force of character, of purity and of truth—of personality. So long as I have these things you can feel easy; no one will be able to injure a hair of my head." In the midst of those personal attacks the Swami was however comforted to note that if the "blue-nosed" and "hard-spelled" American missionary fanatics drawn from low classes slandered him most vehemently, there were high class missionaries, sincere and liberal minded, who were not only not inimical, but were among his best friends and admirers, ever ready to repudiate the mischievous slanders manufactured against their "Eastern Brother."

Antagonism of the Missionaries in India

If the missionaries in America were up in arms against the Swami and were making base allegations against him, being unable to stop the spread of his ever-growing influence, the missionary bodies in India were not by any means keeping quiet. Even towards the beginning of 1894, they commenced their vigorous attack on the dangerous Hindu monk whose lecturers in America were not only affecting their funds but also were doing great harm to their proselytising activities in India. Baseless criticisms against the Swami printed in America were given wide publicity in the Indian missionary papers. Enterprising Christian publishing firms were bringing out "Christian Literature" containing, virulent criticisms of the Swami's speeches and sayings, misrepresenting them most grotesquely, and sometimes giving them even a political savour. Indeed the missionary

activity against the Swami, became at one time very strong in India. Articles and pamphlets were being published, criticising not only the Swami's teachings but also his diet and mode of living, with a view to create an opposition against him amongst the Hindus themselves. Reading some of the allegations regarding the Swami's taking Western food in America, a class of ultra-orthodox Hindus seemed to be antagonistic towards him for a time and even attacked him in strong terms. When his friends and disciples informed him of the missionary propaganda in India, and expressed their misgiving he sent them a very significant reply—"I am surprised you take the 'missionaries' nonsense so seriously. . . . If the people in India want me to keep strictly to my Hindu diet, please tell them to send me a cook and money enough to keep him. This silly *bossism* without a mite of help makes me laugh. On the other hand, if the missionaries tell you that I have ever broken the two great vows of the Sannyasin—chastity and poverty,—tell them that they are *big liars*. . . . As for me, mind you, I stand at nobody's dictation. I know my mission in life. I belong as much to the world as to India. What country has any special claim on me? Am I any nation's slave?

The Swami's Just Criticism and Appreciation

It has been part of the mission of the Christian propagandist to engage himself in a grotesque exaggeration of the evils in India and to denounce Indian culture as a whole. That is how he wants to preach his Westernised Christianity in India and other countries. But Swami Vivekananda showed him a better way of preaching religion. Unlike the Christian missionary, he never wrote any book containing scurrilous attacks on American men and women or on their life and culture, for the purpose of proving the urgency of a Hindu mission in America. If he criticised others, his criticism

was directed against those that deserved it without doubt. But sometimes the missionaries misrepresented his utterances. In one of his lectures he once referred to the "churchy" women of America and their power of inventing scandals. What he said was from his bitter personal experiences, for even in England a scandal was manufactured, and as later investigation proved to the great relief of the Swami's English friends, it was the work of a bigoted American woman. This the Indian missionaries reported to be an attack on American women *en masse* to undo his work. To an American friend who informed him about the mischievous propaganda carried against him, he wrote—"Supposing I had said all sorts of fearful things against the "yanks"—would that be paying off a millionth part of what they say of our *mothers* and *sisters*? "Neptune's waters" would be perfectly useless to wash off the hatred the Christian "yanks" of both sexes bear to us, "heathens of India"—and what harm have we done to them?" Far was it from the Swami's purpose to condemn the nobler sections of American women for whom he had the greatest admiration. In a letter to the Maharaja of Khetre he wrote—"How many beautiful homes I have seen, how many mothers whose purity of character, whose unselfish love for their children are beyond expression, had many daughters and pure maidens, "pure as the icicle on Diana's temple" and withal with much culture, education and spirituality in the highest sense! Is America then full of only wingless angels in the shape of women? There is good and bad everywhere, true—but a nation is not to be judged by its weaklings called the wicked, as they are only the weeds that lag behind, but by the good, the noble and the pure, who indicate the national life current to be flowing clear and vigorous." Let the mischievous slanderers of Indian people bear these memorabe words in mind. How different is their way of judging men from that of the Swami.

The Swami's Example to the Missionaries

The average Christian missionary is ever anxious to prove the barbarous and benighted condition of the entire Indian people. But Swami Vivekananda, who placed truth above everything else, could not indulge in any wholesale condemnation of American men and women. He said the merits and also the evils of the American and his civilisation. "The Americans have their faults too," Said he, "what nation has not? But this is my summing up. Asia laid the germ of civilisation. Europe developed man, and America is developing woman and the masses. It is the paradise of the women and the labourer. The Americans are fast becoming liberal. Judge them not by the specimens of *hard shelled Christians* (it is their own phrase) that you see in India. There are those here too, but their number is decreasing rapidly, and this great nation is progressing fast towards that spirituality which is the standard boast of the Hindu." The Christian missionary in his ignorance thinks that there cannot be any true spiritual men outside his own fold. But the Swami could not hold such a narrow view. Among the cultured American men and women as well as among the upper class missionaries, many of whom were his personal friends, he found, as he said, noble souls who were "as broad, as liberal and as sincere" as the best of Hindus. Never has a Christian missionary been able to speak so highly of non-Christian people, however good and pious they might be. Religious bigotry and race prejudice do not allow him to see the best points in the followers of a different religion. But that was not the case with Swami Vivekananda. He rose above all limitations and narrowness, and recognised good wherever it was found. The missionaries of religion must be just and impartial. This is the ideal that the Swami places before them by the noble example of his life.

The Fallacy of the Critic

In every Society there are evils as well as good. And just as there are immoral and selfish men and women who commit the most heinous crimes without any sense of shame or consideration for others, so there exist pious and holy persons who live a life of extraordinary purity and devotion, and are ever ready to sacrifice their all for the good of their fellow men. This the bigoted critic is not prepared to bear in mind. He thinks as if there are no bad men in his own community and no good men in that of another. He seems to take it for granted that his people possesses all the highest ideals of life, while others have none to speak of at all. Again, he magnifies the evils in others and minimizes his own. He compares the best of his own people with the worst specimens of others. He places the highest idealism of his own society side by side with the grossest realities of other communities. He Judges his own people by a lower standard and others by a higher one which he does not dare to apply to himself or to his community. He sees the mote in other's eyes but not the beam in his own. He judges others while he himself dislikes to be judged. He is anxious to cast stones at others for their sins forgetting that his sins may be greater than theirs. Such is the mentality of the average Christian critics of India and her civilisation, and it is full of fallacy and contradiction. In direct opposition to the teachings of the prophet whose name he bears he takes up an attitude that is altogether wrong and objectionable.

Repudiation of the Charge

The missionary calumniator of Hinduism takes a most partial view of things. Blinded by his preconceived ideas, limited by his intellectual ignorance, and not unoften imbued with, as Sister Nivedita says, "a meaner motive still, the idea that if a true and lofty

tone is taken, money will not be forthcoming to support his own career," the critic cannot and often do not want to come in touch with the real state of affairs in the Indian life as a whole. From a few stray cases gathered from his own one sided experience or from other equally reliable missionary sources, whether religious, educational or medical, he comes to a most illogical generalisation, magnifies the sins of India and indicts the entire Indian people. It does not strike him that in a similar manner any one may pass even a stronger condemnation against his own people. When he describes the religion of the Hindus, which still produces saints of the first magnitude, as a bundle of gross superstitions, he forgets that the same charge has also been laid at the door of Christianity and that compared to the highest forms of Hindu spiritual culture, the ceremonial worship and prayer in the Church is nothing but a poor show of piety and devotion to God. When he denounces the Hindus as being guilty of child marriage, immorality and oppression of women, he fails to consider whether or not all maids and bachelors in the West lead a pure life, or the ever increasing number of divorce cases there are due to cruelty and sex irregularity, or a large number of the children that go to swell the orphanages, and the dead bodies of babies picked up in big Western cities drop from the skies. The missionary does not know, and he also finds it difficult to believe, that there are in India thousands upon thousands of holy men who lead a life of perfect purity, devotion and service, and that others too are trying to attain to this state through their fasts, prayers and physical and mental control. In the words of Sister Nivedita, "Hindus are a people amongst whom the monastic ideal is intensely living. In their eyes the widow, by the fact of her widowhood, is vowed to celibacy and therefore to poverty, austerity, and prayer." Again, when the critic speaks of the

common practice of the Hindu fanatics of throwing themselves deliberately under the wheels of the temple car, which is a downright lie, he does not remember that the number of cases of suicides are increasing by leaps and bounds in his own land and that such cases are comparatively few in India and that Hinduism looks upon suicide as a most heinous crime and condemns it in the strongest possible terms. There are in India cases of immorality, cruelty and crime as in other parts of the world. But these cannot by any means be attributed to the entire nation. Besides, in India poverty and squalor are not necessarily associated with crime, and the poor and the destitute, although subjected to starvation, disease and suffering, are less criminally inclined and more moral and God-fearing than those of the West. India enjoys in this respect, if not also in others a decided advantage over Europe and America. To depict the children of Mother India as a people lost in immorality and vice is a most gross and malicious libel. And most strongly do we repudiate it in the fiery words of Swami Vivekananda written from America in reply to the Madras Address—My Countrymen, I have been more than a year in this country. I have seen almost every corner of their society, and, after comparing notes, let me tell you that neither are we "devils", as the missionaries tell the world we are, nor are they "angels", as they claim to be. The less the missionaries talk of immorality, infanticide, and the evils of the Hindu marriage system, the better for them. There may be actual pictures of some countries before which all the imaginary missionray pictures of the Hindu society will fade into light. But my mission in life is not to be a paid reviler. I will be the last man to claim perfection for the Hindu Society. No man is more conscious of the defects that are therein, or the evils that have grown up under centuries of misfortunes.

"If as foreign friends, you come with genuine sympathy to help and not to destroy, God-speed to you. But if by abuses incessantly hurled against the head of a prostrate race in season and out of season, you mean only the triumphant assertion of the moral superiority of your own nation, let me tell you plainly, if such a comparison be instituted with any amount of justice, the Hindu will be found a head and shoulders above all other nations in the world as a moral race."

THE STORY OF SISTER NIVEDITA'S LIFE

By Swami Vedantananda.

Nivedita—"the dedicated"—was the choicest flower of womanhood offered by Swami Vivekananda at the feet of his beloved motherland. A well-born and highly cultured woman belonging to the proud white race, she came to adopt India as her own country, accept the ancient Aryan religion as her own religion, and love the Indian people as her own kith and kin. And so thoroughly did she transform herself that she became not only a noble embodiment of the highest Indian culture but also its ardent and eloquent interpreter and champion. Her surrender was without any reserve. She gave herself completely, and literally laid down her life for the service of India and her people.

Miss Margaret Noble, for that was the name of Sister Nivedita before she took the vow of life-long Brahmacharya and service, is said to have both Scottish and Irish blood, although she was predominantly Irish both by parentage and birth. She was born at Dungannon, Co. Tyrone, in 1867. "Very soon afterwards," as Mr. S. R. Ratcliffe says in his admirable memoir on the Sister, "her father, Samuel Richmond Noble, entered the Lancashire Independent Collge, in preparation for the Congregational ministry, but did not live to fulfil his early promise." Her mother—Mary Isabel Noble—was a lady of great faith and devotion. She fell seriously ill before the birth of her first daughter Margaret. And she prayed to the Lord to spare her for the sake of the child whom she dedicated to His service. As later events came to show, it was the will of Providence that the girl that was born, should live a life consecrated solely to the service of God and His children.

Little Margaret grew into a girl of rare personality and rarer intellectual powers. She came to evince a great interest in education, underwent training as a teacher in England, and gained great experience by serving in various girl's schools, particularly in one conducted by an ardent advocate of New Education in South London. In 1892 Miss Noble started a school of her own at Wimbledon, London, with a view to realise her ideals of girl's education. She was one of the most active and enthusiastic lady educationists interested in "the newer applications" of educational theory, when she came under the transforming influence of Swami Vivekananda during his first visit to England in 1895.

Miss Noble was an earnest seeker after the Truth, but very different from the so-called orthodox women who pin their faith in traditional modes of thought and forms of worship. By nature she was passionately religious, and once became a member of the Anglican church which however, could not satisfy her hungry soul hankering after the deeper and universal truths of religion. A bold inquirer, a keen reader and a deep thinker, she possessed a highly critical mind that could accept a truth only after a thorough test and analysis. "We were but fifteen or sixteen guests", says Nivedita in her great work, *The Master as I saw Him*, "intimate friends, many of us . . . We were not very orthodox, or open to belief. . . . Most of us had, I incline to think, been singled out for the afternoon's hospitality, on the very score of our unwillingness to believe, for the difficulty of convincing us of the credibility of religious propaganda in general." It was a habit with Miss Noble to try to protect her judgment against ill-considered enthusiasm. She disputed the assertions of the Swami and raised great controversies, at times, becoming not only contentious but positively hostile. But the "Hindu yogi" instead of feeling offended at the attitude of the disputant must have felt glad at heart on the discovery of the superior stuff she was made of. Referring to this matter he said long afterwards to her—"Let none regret that they were difficult to convince. I fought my Master for six long years, with the result that I know every inch of the way! Every inch of the way!" Miss Noble resisted her Master only to be conquered by him heart and soul. And before the Swami left England she began to address him as "Master". Born with the heroic fibre herself, she "recognised the heroic fibre of the man" and desired to make herself "the servant of his love for his own people."

Swami Vivekananda was not like an ordinary preacher who spoke of the narrow doctrines and dogmas of a sect or denomination. As a true disciple of Sri Ramakrishna he always dwelt on the universal ideals of religion, and as the apostle of a new age, he advocated the exchange and assimilation of the best ideals of the East and the West. The wonderful breadth of his religious culture, the newness of his teachings, and the irresistible charm of his personality—all these came as a great revelation to Miss Noble. And naturally her scepticism yielded place to faith. She came to be convinced as she said later on that the Swami's call was sounded "in the name of that which was strongest and finest, and was not in any way dependent on the meaner elements in man."

The Swami visited England for the second time in April, 1896. On the previous occasion he had made many friends, but this time he won ardent disciples anxious to devote themselves heart and soul to the great cause of their Master. And Miss Noble was avowedly one of the most prominent among them. She had not very many opportunities to hear and know the Swami during his first visit. But now she was a constant listener to his talks and lectures, and became drawn towards him more than before. Recalling these days says the Sister Nivedita in her *The Master as I Saw Him*, "He had come to us as a missionary of the Hindu belief in the Immanent God, he called upon us to realise the truth of his Gospel for ourselves. . . . He was deeply convinced of the need for Indian thought, in order to enable the religious consciousness of the West to welcome and assimilate the discoveries of modern science, and to enable it also to survive that destruction of local mythologies which is an inevitable result of all world-consolidations. He felt that what was wanted was a formulation of faith which could make its adherents fearless of truth." The Swami always preached the Gospel of strength which made a tremendous appeal to the heroic heart of Miss Noble. He proclaimed that "character, and character alone, was the power that determined the permanence of a religious wave." He held that the duty of a citizen was resistance, while that of the monk non-resistance which in reality, was an expression of greater strength than resistance. "Forgive," said he, "when you can bring legions of angels to an easy victory." If the disciple discovered the glory of her Master, the Master also in his turn found out the rare worth of the disciple. "I have plans," he said to her, "for the women of my own country in which you, I think, could be of great help to

me." And how whole heartedly he accepted the disciple can be known from what he later on wrote to her. "I will stand by you unto death, whether you work for India or not, whether you give up Vedanta or remain in it. The tusks of the elephant come out, but they never go back. Even so are the words of a man."

Miss Noble responded to the call her Master and decided to proceed to India. She asked for her mother's permission and got it. It was very extraordinary for an orthodox Christian lady to readily allow her daughter to go to a strange land and cast her lot with a strange people. The mother had no doubt unbounded faith in her illustrious daughter. But the main reason why she unhesitatingly gave her consent was, as she long after told an American fellow-disciple of Miss Noble, that she remembered her old vow and was glad to see that it was going to be fulfilled though in quite an unexpected manner. She was also highly pleased to learn from the American lady that the very name that was given to her daughter by the Swami meant "the one consecrated." Strangely enough the daughter was never told by her mother of the story of her dedication to God. She came to know of it for the first time from the American lady friend, and must have marvelled to think that the course of life she came to take was as it were preordained even before her birth.

Miss Noble landed at Calcutta in January, 1898. Shortly after a party of friends arrived from America. All these Western disciples made their temporary home at the newly purchased quarters at Belur which later on became the headquarters of the Sri Ramakrishna Order. "It was as the guest of these friends, here at Belur," hints Sister Nevidita, "and later, travelling in Kumaon and in Kashmir, that I began, with them, the study of India, and something also of the home-aspects and relationships of the Swami's own life." Miss Noble's training began as soon as she came to India. She was initiated into the life of a Brahmacharini by her Master and was given the name by which she became well known all over the world. The Master took her on an extensive tour along with the American friends for the purpose of giving her a deep insight into Indian thought and culture, and also a personal training for the work he wanted her to undertake for the women of India.

Nivedita had to pass through a terrible conflict of ideals and consequent confusion at the beginning of her training. She had

constant clash with her Master who wanted to give a new mould to her personality by destroying her self-sufficiency and by removing the most cherished prepossessions of her mind. This period of transition, as she then felt it, seemed to be the most unhappy period of the disciple's life, but still it never occurred to her to retract her proffered service. Speaking of these days she observes, "Suffering is often illogical, and I cannot attempt to justify by reason the degree of unhappiness which I experienced at this time, as I saw the dream of a friendly and beloved leader falling away from me, and the picture of one who would be at least indifferent, and possibly silently hostile, substituting itself instead." But this suffering was in fact the travail of a new birth and was soon going to end happily. One day the Master said, "Let us begin a new life." With these words he lifted his hands, blessed his "most rebellious" disciple kneeling before him, and brought about an unexpected spiritual transformation in her life and thought. Nivedita came to be reborn as the true spiritual daughter of Swami Vivekananda. And she felt in place of the bitterness of conflict the ineffable sweetness of peace and reconciliation.

After her most profitable travels, Nivedita returned to Calcutta in the beginning of November, 1898 with a view to open a girl school and "to make some educational discovery which would be qualitatively true and universally applicable, to the work of the modern education of Indian women." She became the guest of the community of the Hindu ladies of whom the Holy Mother—the nun-wife and chief lady disciple of Sri Ramakrishna—was the head. These holy women exerted a great influence on Nivedita's life, and revealed to her the grace and dignity, the ideal and glory of Indian womanhood. It was with the help of the Holy Mother and other noble ladies that Swami Vivekananda was able to make a place for this Western disciple in Hindu Society. Hereafter, Nivedita was to live the life of an orthodox Brahmin Brahmacharini. During the first half of 1899 she freely associated and dined with people of various classes, both Indian and European, in Calcutta. But the Master held up before her a different mode of life as she had to prepare herself for the women's work. He expressly told her during their voyage to England—"You must give up all visiting, and live in strict seclusion, you have to set yourself to Hinduise your thoughts, your needs, your conceptions, and your habits. Your life, internal and external, has to become all that an orthodox Hindu Brahmin Brahmacharini's ought to be.

The method will come to you, if only you desire it sufficiently. But you have to forget your own past, and to cause it to be forgotten. You have to lose even its memory."

Accompanied by the Swami, Sister Nivedita left Calcutta for the West in June 1899. This voyage of six weeks as well as her stay with him for about the same period as a guest of friends in America, brought Nivedita in most intimate touch with her Master's wonderful mind and personality, and enabled her to enter into the very depths of Hindu religion and culture. After this, besides spending a fortnight with him in Brittany in September, 1900, she never again had the opportunity of living with him. These were certainly the most precious days of her life. On the last evening of her stay in Brittany the Swami called her, and blessing her most heartily, said—"There is a peculiar sect of Muhammadans who are reported to be so fanatical that they take each new born babe, and expose it saying, 'If God made thee, perish! If Ali made thee, live!' Now that which they say to the child, I say, but in the opposite sense, to you, to-night—'Go forth into the world, and there, if I made you, be destroyed! If Mother made you, live!'" With this practically ended the days of Nivedita's discipleship. The Swami returned to India at the close of 1900. Nivedita remained in the West until the beginning of 1902, when she came back to India as if to receive the final benediction of her Master who passed away in July, 1902.

After her return from the West, Nivedita resumed her work under more favourable conditions than before. All suspicions about her were removed. She was cordially accepted by the society she came to serve. The unfailing charm of her character, her intense love for India and Indian people and culture, her spirit of selfless service to all without distinction—all these endeared her to the people of the locality where she made her home. As Mr. S. R. Ratcliffe observes in his sketch on the Sister --"She was entirely accepted by her Hindu neighbours. In the bazars and lanes and by the riverside everybody knew her and she would be saluted as she passed with an affectionate reverence which was beautiful and touching to see. . . . The people remembered how when the plague broke out among them, Sister Nivedita had joined with the brethren of the Order of Ramakrishna in a crusade of nursing and sanative cleansing. And in times when there was no spectacular call of pestilence or flood, there went out from her house a constant stream of social and personal

service." While the Indian people loved Nivedita as their very own, the Europeans, except the few of her intimate friends who appreciated her life and ideal of service, looked upon her as a gifted "crank" who avoided European society with a "perverse-ness" unintelligible to them. But Nivedita knew her mission and was never known to repent for her choice. Without caring for praise or blame, she carried on her school work with great vigour and enthusiasm. In the early part of 1902 an American fellow-disciple—Miss Christine Greenstidel, later on known as Sister Christine—joined her and came to shoulder the greater portion of her school burden. Sister Christine was a great educationist and introduced the most modern methods of education in the school. Both the Sisters tried their best to create there an ideal Indian environment. It was this that secured the confidence of the most orthodox families, and drew not only little girls up to the marriageable age but also a large number of married women and widows. The special merit of the school was that unlike the Christian missionary institutions it made no attempt to convert the pupils to any outlandish religion and culture. The students were helped to imbibe the highest Hindu ideals, traditions and customs along with their general education. The great experiment that was made by Nivedita and her colleague proved to be eminently successful. But it is unfortunate to think that while many admired the institution, very few came forward to help and support her financially.

Nivedita had to make the greatest sacrifice for the sake of the school. Forsaking all the comforts and luxuries of a Western home in the European quarters of Calcutta, she came to live an ascetic life in a small old house situated in a humble quarter of Northern Calcutta. But the small house "with its two courtyards, its limited second story, and its quaintly-terraced roofs, built at five different levels" looked charming in the eyes of Nivedita. One of her students described it in a memoir written soon after the passing away of the Sister, "The school is far from being in a healthy or well-ventilated house. The rooms are small and the roof is very low. During the summer (when the school remains closed) the rooms get so hot that half an hour's stay in them will make the head ache. . . . There were no fans hung in Nivedita's room. She always used to have a hand-fan about her. Most of the day she used to stay in that room buried in her work." Her work was mostly literary, and it was undertaken for the maintenance of the school. This income was very insufficient. At times when funds would fall short, Nivedita would curtail her

own very limited personal expenses, and would even deny herself the bare necessities of life. All this privation and neglect of health brought a serious illness on Nivedita in the early part of 1905. She recovered from it, but it was followed by a prolonged attack of malarial fever which she got as the result of her visit to the flood and famine stricken areas in Barisal in the autumn of 1906. The magnificent health of Nivedita broke down, and she could never regain it thereafter.

Nivedita led an intensely active life. Besides, attending to her school and literary work, she used to give frequent addresses to various audiences in Calcutta and elsewhere. Sometime after her return from the West in 1902 she went on a lecturing tour to Western India and later to Southern India, carrying everywhere the dynamic message of her Master and laying bare before all the glory of Hindu religion and culture, history and art. But in later years she devoted herself mostly to literary activities. Her comparatively silent life enabled her to spread her ideas very effectively through her writings. Besides she became a centre of great personal influence. Her home was ever open to all who sought her advice and service. Leaders of political thought, men of letters, scientists, artists, journalists, teachers and students alike often met there and there she inspired by the high ideals of her religious culture, spiritual nationalism and selfless service. She was one of the most potent forces that purified and intensified the national consciousness of all those who came under the spell of her influence, whether directly or indirectly. Hers was the call to "service and achievement for the motherland."—"No more words—words—words. Let us have deeds—deeds—deeds." In the words of one of her Western friends, "she talked ever more freely than she wrote, and her conversation rich, spontaneous, clear-cut as a judicial utterance, threw new light upon art, literature and even science, and revealed her bold and fiery aspirations after Indian nationality. If this was not her religion, it was certainly a large part of it, and it would be difficult to exaggerate her influence upon the national movement. . . Her influence over young Bengal was greater than most people have ever suspected."

Nivedita spent the last three years of her life in England and America. She returned to India during the first half of 1911. But she returned only to pass away in the lap of her adopted motherland to whose services she offered her body, heart and soul. She went for a change to Darjeeling. There she caught dysentery, and

passed away on 13th October, 1911. She retained consciousness till the very end. "The boat is sinking. But I shall see the sun rise," saying this she slept a sleep from which there was no return. The illusions of life were broken, and Nivedita passed into the abode of Light. The mortal body that she left was consumed by fire but the immortal soul, freed from the trammels of the world, attained to its true state in Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute.

Sister Nivedita has left to the world her immortal works—the best fruits of her deep study and wonderful experiences. It was undoubtedly the will of Providence that she chose to be a writer rather than a speaker. The mission of the twin souls whom she used to call Ramakrishna-Vivekananda, is being and will be admirably served through the circulation of her invaluable books which are reaching an ever increasing circle of readers both in the East and in the West. Her books give a faithful interpretation of the highest Hindu ideals realised by Western genius by piercing through the "fleshy screen" that hides the view of both the unsympathetic stranger and the blinded children of the land. Nivedita's *Kali the Mother* came as a revelation to people accustomed to look upon Her as the hideous and bloody goddess of destruction. "The Kali-image," She says, "is not so much a picture of the deity, as the utterance of the secret of our own lives. . . . Bend low, and you shall hear the answer that India makes to the Eternal Motherhood, through all her ages of torture and despair. Listen well, for the voice is low that speaks, and the crash of ruin mighty: 'Though Thou slay me, yet will I trust in Thee!'" In her *Web of Indian Life*, according to many, her greatest book, Nivedita reveals the undying spirit of India with unsurpassed beauty and faith. In her *Cradle Tales of Hinduism, An Indian Study of Love and Death* she speaks of the eternal ideals of India as realised in the past and to be realised in the future. In her master-piece—*The Master as I saw Him*—the last work to be published in her life time she narrates the story of the life and mission of her illustrious Master and of her unique experiences gained through her living touch with him. It is of this book that Prof. T. K. Cheyne of the Oxford University had said, "It may be placed among the choicest religious classics, below the various scriptures, but on the same shelf with the 'Confessions of Saint Augustine' and Sabatier's 'Life of Saint Francis'". Nivedita's works:—*The Cote and National Ideals, Studies from an Eastern Home, Notes of*

some wanderings with the Swami Vivekananda, Footfalls of Indian History, Religion and Dharma, Siva and Buddha, Hints on Education etc.—most of which are collections of her numerous articles and essays contributed to various magazines interpreting the vital truths about the various aspects of Indian life and thought, history and tradition, art and architecture. Her works are very valuable contributions to world-thought. And they will be read with great interest and profit by all who want to possess a true insight into the various phases of Indian life, individual and collective.

It was the most earnest desire of Swami Vivekananda to inaugurate a movement for the regeneration of Indian womanhood. And to carry on this great work he wanted cultured and fearless Brahmacharinis who would lead a life of perfect chastity and spirituality, renunciation and service. "The celebrate nuns," said the Swami, "will be teachers and preachers In villages and towns they will open centres and strive for the spread of female education. Through such devout preachers of character there will be the real spread of female education in the country." It is a pity that the Swami could not find among the daughters of India a single soul to take up this ideal. But he was fortunate in discovering in a noble daughter of the West the potentiality of a Hindu Brahmacharini, one who would be able not only to realise the ideal in her own life, but also speak of its glory to others for their benefit. And her the Swami trained with infinite patience and affection, and held as an ideal of a new type of womanhood,—an ideal embodied in his words of blessing addressed to his spiritual daughter Nivedita—

"The Mother's heart, the hero's will,
The sweetness of the southern breeze,
The sacred charm and strength that dwell
On Aryan altars, flowing, free ;
All these be yours, and many more,
No ancient soul could dream before
Be thou to India's future son
The mistress, servant, friend in one."

Nivedita was a very complex personality. And as such she was a living paradox to many. No kinder woman ever lived. She was always ready with her offering of love and service. But if she was beneficent, she was terrible also. She used to burst into indignant flash and veritable thunder to witness the insolence and

degradation to which the Indian was subjected. Says Mr. H. W. Nevins, "There was no dull tolerance about her, and I suppose no one ever called her gentle. Even with friends her disagreement could be vehement, and her contradiction was very direct. In face of the enemy her eyes turned to glowing steel and under anger they deepened in colour. Her scorn of presumptuous ignorance and her indignation at wrong were blasting." There was always something flaming about her. The fire of Brahmacharya and Tapas—chastity and penance—endowed her with a charm and radiance, which illumined her friends but consumed her opponents, especially those who assumed a complacent and supercilious attitude towards India, her people and culture. She was unsparing in her criticism of the defects of Indian character. But she again it was who stood as an intrepid champion of all that was good and noble in Indian civilisation. She was not only a teacher at school, but a preceptress to the children of Mother India, to whom she revealed the greatness of their spiritual and cultural heritage with a unique sympathy, introspection and power. She was always confident of India's glorious future, and was providentially chosen to be one of those instrumental in ushering in the dawn of a new age in India. Indeed to the sons of India Nivedita had been, as her Master wished, "the mistress, servant, friend in one."

A TALK TO STUDENTS

(At Benares)

By Swami Atulananda

During my sojourn in India, this holy city of Benares, the ancient as well as the modern seat of Hindu culture and sanctity seems to act on me like a magnet. Every now and then in my wanderings in this vast and most interesting country of yours I am drawn to this great metropolis on the banks of the most sacred river in all India, and as I breathe in the atmosphere of Kasi I feel as if I were transplanted to a new world, a world set aside for a definite purpose.

Here, in the centre of India, I find a city given to a special ideal, and that ideal the loftiest that man can aspire to: For here, from East and West, north and south, from the most remote corners of the land people pour in day after day, year after year, century after century with the great purpose to study Truth, meditate on and to realize Truth; to come face to face with God.

The search for Truth is the occupation of every human being. Consciously or unconsciously our whole life is a search for Truth. It has been said that happiness is the aim of life. Every living being wants to be happy, to avoid misery. Correct! But the question is, what is true happiness?

Real happiness is found in Truth and in Truth alone, nowhere else; for Truth alone is Anandam, the highest Bliss. Every happiness we enjoy in life, whether it comes through the mind or the senses, is but a particle of that great happiness which we call Anandam. Every one of us wants Bliss. And instinctively we know that this Bliss is to be found somehow, somewhere. Therefore we can never be satisfied till we get it.

That this instinct is a true instinct, and not a vain imagination we know from our scriptures. They tell us that all creation is permeated with Bliss. *Anando Brahmam vyajanat*. "From Bliss creation sprang into being, by Bliss it is maintained, towards Bliss does it proceed, into Bliss does it enter." And again: *Dyauh santirantarikshagun santh*. "Heaven is filled with peace, and so are the sky, earth, water, trees, the gods, the creator. All in peace. May that peace come to me." And that Santi, that peace, for which the Rishi prayed is not different from Anandam, Bliss.

So we all want happiness. It is the search for happiness that has brought you here, to Benares; that has made you enlist as students. Here you want to acquire the knowledge that may make it possible for us to live a happy, and I hope, a useful life. It is the search for happiness that draws thousands of pilgrims away from their homes to a strange city, away from their friends and relatives, to the bank of the Ganges, to the feet of Viswanath, the Lord of the Universe. It is the search for happiness that has brought me here from far away America, a distance of thousands of miles to learn the great lesson India has to teach, not only to me but to all sincere seekers after truth. It is the search for true happiness that has made you ask me to discuss the great problem of life, how to make the best use of our opportunities. Thus we go on seeking in all directions till we shall find that Anandam which is Truth itself.

Our condition in life is beautifully illustrated in the *Mundaka* and other Upanishads. Two birds are living on the same tree. The tree bears two kinds of fruit, sweet and bitter, but they look alike. One of the birds perched on the top of the tree sits there

quietly enjoying its own blissful condition. But the other bird hops from branch to branch greedy to eat of the fruit. When it pecks at a sweet fruit the bird is happy, but when it gets the bitter taste it is disgusted. Then it looks up to the other bird and thinks, "How happy you are ! I was foolish to expect all the fruit to be sweet." Thinking thus the bird goes higher up in the tree towards its happy mate. But the fruits look so tempting, the bird forgets that sweet and bitter look alike, and again it eats, and the fruit is bitter. Thus on it goes : disappointment, and then drawing nearer to its mate, till at last the lower bird comes face to face with the upper bird. Then, suddenly, it realizes that it is only the shadow of the upper bird, and drawing still closer, it merges itself in the upper bird, and with it comes the realization that in its real essence it was the upper bird all the time.

This is life—the Jivatman tasting the pleasures and sorrows of the world till it merges into the Atman. Then comes the awakening that it was in reality the Atman all the time, that its true nature is Bliss itself.

It is one of the characteristics of the human mind, and a very happy and needful characteristic to be curious. Every moment of our lives we want to know something. The mind and the senses are always going outward, always inquisitive, always eager to gather information. So long this curiosity is not satisfied we remain restless, we cannot focus our mind, we cannot give our full attention to the work at hand.

We live in an era of unrest, of confusion. This is so not only in India but over the entire world. The greatest minds of to-day are occupied with the question how to bring some satisfaction, some harmony out of this chaos ; how to settle this endless disputes between the different nations of the world. The great diplomats of to-day are racking their brains to find a solution to the question how to maintain peace, how to prevent another world-war more terrible than anything the world has ever witnessed. In America a prize of one hundred thousand dollars, three lakhs of rupees, was held out to the person who produced the best essay dealing with world-peace. But no satisfactory solution has yet been offered.

Now, it seems to me, that in theory at least the answer may be found in India, for your scriptures teach that all creation is one conscious whole, a living organism, of which each being is a

member. "All this is Brahman." We are all parts of one whole; every race, every individual, is a manifestation of one Supreme Being. All humanity, in truth, is one great Brotherhood.

But the world can not be satisfied with theories. This truth has to be made practical, was to be demonstrated. You have the theory. Now we look towards you for the practical demonstration.

What, Young India, have you to offer? What have you to show? Do you feel, do you act like members of a universal Brotherhood? Childish national vanity, treating with disdain other nations of which you know very little, underrating the spiritual and moral power of other races, regarding yourselves as the only chosen people, your country as God; and showing indifference towards the rest of the world,—this is conceit, this will never do! You will have to place yourselves on the universal plane. From there you shall have to think and act. Unless you are imbued with sympathy for the world, you cannot expect the world to sympathize with you.

My friends, the present leaders of world-movements are passing away. A few years more and you, who are students now will form part of the educated class in India. A great responsibility will be placed upon your shoulders, not only the responsibility of supporting a family, but also the responsibility resting upon every adult member of a great, civilized nation. The world is knit together as it was never before; no nation any longer can stand alone; your problems will be world-problems.

You are now to equip yourselves, to acquire knowledge, to develop character, to get strong mentally and physically, and, I hope, also spiritually. You are now to prepare yourselves for manhood, to lay the foundation of what constitutes a real man.

Some twenty years ago the Swami Vivekananda predicted the great catastrophe that overtook the West. He warned the Western nations that unless they turned to spiritual methods their materialistic civilization would crumble to pieces. His voice was like "the voice of one crying in the wilderness", unheeded. At present Western nations realize to some extent their mistake. But the wheel of events once set into motion is not so easily stopped. A voice is raised here and there to put a halt to the wild rush toward materialism; a warning note is sounded to turn to things spiritual. But readjustment is a gradual

process, it cannot be accomplished in a day. You know the old saying, Prevention is better than cure. The Swami Vivekananda has pointed out the way how India may avoid the mistakes of the West. And unless his advice is heeded the future of India looks dark indeed.

"The strength of India," The Swami " said, is in her religion. Not by imitating the West but by being true to her own principles India is sure to rise, to take her place once more among the civilized nations of the world. India stands for spirituality, and that spirituality she must bring to other nations taking in exchange whatever good the West has to offer."

Now, every nation is aware of the fact that her future strength depends on her youths. That is why at present the training of boys and girls in Western countries has become an all-important question. It is generally admitted that the old methods do no longer suffice, and new methods of education are being introduced in every great city. It is everywhere recognized that there is something lacking in the young people who have finished their university course. Their brains are stuffed with knowledge, but they lack the wisdom to apply this knowledge to the best advantage, and they have not the character necessary to live and die for a great ideal. The cause of this inefficiency is now traced to a low standard of morality among the students. Moral and spiritual training has been neglected. The students often live a life of dissipation, wasting their strength before they enter upon manhood. They have not practised what has always been held as the highest ideal in India, namely Brahmacharya. In the *Mundaka Upanishad* it is said, " The Truth hidden in the heart, resplendent and pure can be attained by sound knowledge, and Brahmacharya constantly practised."

No youth can ever expect to become great unless he adheres to the rules of Brahmacharya laid down by all great teachers of India. The ancient Rishis in India in their forest universities enforced this rule on all their students. Chastity, truthfulness, integrity, were everywhere insisted upon. "My hope for this country," the Swami Vivekananda exclaimed, " rests on the young healthy, the strong, the pure." And you all know how strongly Brahmacharya is advocated by your great national leader Mahatma Gandhi.

The corner-stone on which is built true manhood and character, is Brahmacharya. Train yourselves now, while you are

young, to be pure and truthful in word, thought and deed. It will give you tremendous brain-power, will-power, endurance, health and strength. Self-control practised in youth will bear fruit for the rest of your lives. All great men are chaste and truthful. That is what gives them their magnetic personality, what gives them their influence over other men. They are dynamos of strength because they have stored up their energy from their early boyhood. Dissipation wrecks the nervous system and weakens the brain. Practise Brahmacharya and a great future lies before you.

In ancient times in India, the universities were located away from the cities, away from the temptations found in crowded towns. In these forest retreats the students lived in close contact with their Guru, watching his behavior, serving him, learning from him. And the process of giving instruction was altogether different from what it is in the universities to-day.

"Education," the Swami Vivekananda said, "is bringing out the perfection that is already in man." It does not mean overloading the mind with knowledge of facts and data. It means bringing out the best that is inherent in every human being. It means bringing to the surface, and bringing into action the noble qualities of the soul. Education means character-building.

In India education and religion went hand in hand. "My religion," the Swami Vivekananda said, "is character building." This, the West has forgotten. Education has been divorced from religion. In the public schools in America religion is not allowed to be taught, there is no moral training. Hence their failure.

Your ancient Rishis knew better. They understood that religion and education should never be separated. The one is but the fulfilment of the other. No true education is possible without a high moral standard to build upon. The highest knowledge we can attain is the knowledge of the Atman, our true self. "Knowing Him, everything else becomes known." So it is said in the Kathopanishad : None who has not turned away from bad conduct, whose senses are not under control, whose mind is not collected or at rest can attain the knowledge of the Atman.

The first instruction imparted in the ancient forest universities was moral conduct, control of the mind and the senses. Once the mind is controlled knowledge comes easily. A controlled mind can master all knowledge.

This is the second point I wish to emphasize. Practise control of mind. In your studies, in your games, practise control of mind. All great athletes know that half of their strength lies in controlling their minds. During their time of training they control their senses, they abstain from all forms of dissipation, they regulate their diet, they practise according to strict rules. And in the field they keep close watch over their minds, not to become ruffled by anything the opponent may perpetrate. And so it is in every pursuit of life. The business man, the lawyer, the inventor, every one knows that the secret of success lies in control of mind, never to get excited, never to get angry or annoyed, never to give way to outbursts of temper even under the most provoking conditions.

During your university career this is an important point to remember. Don't allow your mind to play tricks on you. Be master of your mind, not its slave. When it is time for study, study. When it is time for play, play, no matter what your mind may say. Your mind may be lazy, disinclined to work or play. Take hold of your mind, and force it to perform its duty.

Obedience to superiors was in the forest universities the method employed to master the mind, to keep it from being willful, from following its own inclinations. "Know the Atman, the Self, as the lord of the chariot," the *Kathopanishad* says, "the body is only the chariot, Intelligence is the driver, and the mind, the reins. The senses are the horses." "Intelligence, the Buddhi, must take firm hold of the mind, the reins, then, the horses will go in the right direction, and the chariot will reach the goal. Regulate your lives, have a program, set aside appointed hours for study as well as for recreation; and regulate your diet. It is difficult to acquire good habits. But once good habits are established life will run smoothly and the best results will be obtained. Study the biographies of successful men, and you will find that they live regulated lives. They first decide what they want to do, then they draw up a program, and then they adhere to that program allowing nothing to interfere "He who has his mind always under control and who is pure," the scriptures say, "reaches the goal."

To be continued.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

SUPREME IMPORTANCE OF THE DYING MOMENT

All the great seers of the world in their attempts to peep through the Shadow of Death have with one voice proclaimed the existence of a life after death. The Hindu and the Buddhist, the Christian and the Jew, the Mussalman and the Parsi—all believe in a life after death which has been declared to be a preparation for the future life. And although each religion in its own way pictures the vision of the Beyond none has failed to impress on its votaries the belief that the future life of man depends in some specially intimate way upon his state of mind at death.

In a recent issue of the *Annals of the Bhandarkar Institute* there appears an article on "The Hour of Death" by Mr. Franklin Edgerton of Yale University wherein he discusses the view points of the various religions concerning this interesting theme.

Even in the youngest of religions—Mohammedanism—we have traces of this belief—that the dying state of mind determines a man's future life. "Whoso's last words are the Kalima (profession of faith 'there is no God but God'), so runs the faith, will enter Paradise," and it is directed that this shall be recited in the presence of the dying. Thus we see a Mohammedan could be saved without reference to his past life if he but died with this specially holy formula on his lips.

Turning to Christianity we find the same idea. "The frame of mind," says Mr. Edgerton, "at the hour of death is of crucial importance in determining the fate of the soul after death." "The classical or canonical authority for the efficacy", continues the writer, "is the story of the Penitent thief at the Crucifixion; despite his evil life, Jesus assures him of Paradise because of his pious disposition at the end. * * * * In other words he (the Christian) conceived that at the moment when his fate in the next life would be decided, his spiritual state would be what it was at death without any particular reference to his previous life." In fact in the *Ritual Romanum*, the official ritual book of the Roman Catholic Church, a fifth of the whole Roman ritual is devoted to ceremonies concerned with man's last hour that he may chalk out a hopeful future.

Examining the sister religion, Judaism, what do we find? The Jewish ritual demands the dying man at his last hour to repeat thrice, "Blessed be His name whose glorious kingdom is for ever and ever" and seven times "The Lord He is God" if he wishes a happy future. Thus in Judaism as well as in Christianity man could get right with God at the last moment despite a long life of wickedness.

Nor is the religion of the Parsi lacking in this belief. Zoroastrianism asks the dying man to confess his sins as does Christianity and then to repeat the *Ashem Vohu*—the sacred formula from the *Avesta* which plays exactly the role of the Hindu sacred Mantrams and the divine names among Hindu, Jew and Christian alike.

Now coming to India we observe the same belief in the three religions of India—Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. Jainism believes that the life after death will depend upon the state of mind at death. It says that *nidana* (a wish for some worldly benefit in a future birth) is to be exercised at least at death even if it had not been entertained previously. So also does the Buddhist canon recognise this: "Earnest wish" which in Pali goes by the name of *Patthana* or *abhinihara*. "Though a man", records the *Milinda Panha*, "should have lived a hundred years of an evil life, yet if, at the moment of death, thoughts of the Buddha should enter his mind, he will be reborn among the Gods." Even in the case of Buddha himself it is said he attained his Buddhahood as a result of an *abhinihara* which he made under a previous Buddha Dipamkara.

But no trace of such a belief is to be found in the Vedic Samhitas. Therefore it is to be concluded that in India such a belief was a later growth. This idea seems to have gained ground only in the Middle Vedic period or Brahmana period. It appears in the *Salapatha Brahmana*. Therein it is said that man's future depended upon his total frame of mind at the time when he passed away from the world. "He who is certain" says the Brahmana "that he will obtain the Atman which is his real Self after death his destiny is assured." Coming down to later times, in the period of the Upanishads we have a clear statement of this belief. The *Prasna Upanishad*, Chapter 3, Verses 9 and 10, tells us:—

"The Fire is verily Udana, for they in whom the fire has extinguished, go for rebirth with their senses absorbed in the mind. Whatever his thought (at the dying moment) with that he becomes the Prana; the Prana united with the fire leads on with the Atman into the desired world." From this it is clear that the thought entertained at the dying moment determines our next existence. And so it is that in the last moments of a man, the room he is in reverberates with the chant of Mantras in order that the dying man in that atmosphere of godliness may remember His name and attain salvation. The beautiful story of Ajamila need not be repeated here. He lived a life of sin and simply because in calling his son he uttered the name of Narayana—for that was his son's name—he attained to heaven. For it has been said that the Lord's name even unconsciously uttered will burn all the sins as a log of wood is burned by fire or disease by medicine. Such is the power of the Lord's name. Why seek in stories or legends for such authority, No less a person than the Lord Sri Krishna himself speaks to Arjuna: "He, who at the time of death, meditating on Me alone, goes forth leaving the body, attains My being: there is no doubt of this."

Whatever the basis of this notion may be we see that in the history of mankind there has been a common belief that the dying state of mind determined the course life would take after death. The thoughtful Hindu mind tried to connect a man's future life with the doctrine of Karma—"conceivng the state of the soul at death as a sort of automatic reflex or summary as it were of the soul's preceding life." And hence the mind of man who had led a good life must be in a good state at the time of his death.

Europe and Christianity.

Western Christianity has received a rude shock at the hands of its professed adherents. Even at the beginning of the last century one could notice stirrings against that religion in the West. Lead by Comte, the Positivist, who propounded his three stages of thought—*theological, metaphysical, and positive*—the "progressives in the world of thought" attempted to lay bare the hollowness of Christianity and carried on a crusade against religion in general and founded a church of the "religion of humanity". Yet the great bulk of the population stuck to their old ways. But as the century rolled on, mighty inventions in the field of science slowly and silently undermined the very fundamentals of their ancient faith. It resulted in a division of the followers of Christ into Fundamentalists and Modernists. The controversy which led to this division is still raging in the West. The Fundamentalists hold that the whole Bible from cover to cover contains gospel truth; that the cosmological and dogmatic conceptions are nothing but facts; and that all achievements of science including even the latest are but "blasphemous attacks upon higher spiritual interests". The Modernist on the other hand demands a rationalistic explanation of the world, and is prepared to bow down to science and understand the Bible in its light.

A careful examination of the History of Europe reveals to us that Christianity has ceased to be a potent factor because "the shepherds of the flock" have failed to follow Christ and live like him. While the Prince of Peace called upon his disciples to take up the cross and follow him, his followers livng a life of luxury and ease have sought to place him on a throne of gold with the sceptre of the tyrant in his hand. With a Bible in one hand and a gun in the other European Christianity has been marching "carrying light to the barbarous" and gaining more and more in her material prosperity. The Sacred name of Christ has been defiled and made an instrument for her self-aggrandisement.

Defacing Christ in this manner brought about the terrible tragedy of 1914. The peace of Europe broke in that year. Europe with all her knowledge of science managed to maim or kill, during a period of about seven short years more people than all her science could save during the period of half a century of peace that preceded it. Suffering, intense suffering, has opened the eyes of Europe today. There has been a sincere demand for religion. Many have begun to feel that religion should not be departmental, but should permeate and control all departments

of life. They have also begun to feel that it is the only solace in life. Where can the solace come from? Can it be from the truths of professed Christianity which she has begun to suspect? Already the intellect of Europe has questioned the existence of Christ himself. In 1922 M. Loisy published his *Les Livres des Nouveaux Testament*, one of the most important and significant books on this subject. There he re-arranges the New Testament and practically surrenders the whole gospel story as history and speaks of the chain of events therein as symbolical or fictional. Another student of the origins of Christianity, Dr. Couchoud, has declared in his *Enigma of Jesus* "that as a historical personage Jesus is unknown" and that "Jesus is derived from induction". One of the Scholars of this School, Dr. Georg Brandes, a Danish Professor has lately published his *Jesus a Myth*. In it the learned professor maintains that Jesus is as legendary in character as William Tell and others. A writer in the *Sunday Chronicle* in reviewing this book states; "From all countries there are signs of the existence of a deliberate war on religion" meaning Christianity and "anti-Christian demonstrations are being deliberately fomented, religious belief of all description is being violently assailed, and the war against what is termed the 'autocracy of God' is being openly proclaimed." The same writer describes Dr. Brandes' Book as a "powerful intellectual attempt to destroy the historical basis of Christianity." The West is thus divided against itself in the matter of its beliefs.

No doubt science by its discoveries has ministered successfully and ably to the material well-being of Europe, but it has failed to give her peace of mind. Science has given Europe, health, innumerable ways of physical enjoyment and has made her as it were the Supreme ruler of the world: but this same science has equipped her with terrible weapons for a whole-sale slaughter of men. Nor have the theories of Individualism and Socialism procured her peace. While Individualism has brought in its train social anarchy, Socialism has left her in the clutches of the tyranny of capitalists who fatten themselves on the misery of the many. Material prosperity having been secured, the scientific West thought that the long-wished for millennium was at hand. But unfortunately it was the butchering of millions perpetrated in the name of the Prince of Peace—the Christ—that Europe witnessed. The mournful West has become disillusioned. She seeks peace which science has failed to give. She wants a religion which calls forth what is highest and best in humanity without being indifferent or negligent at the same time to the social order which so largely determines the individual's aims, duties and standards of judgment. As Christianity has failed to satisfy Europe in its demand for peace it has turned its attention to other religions. And hence we find a mosque to-day in England—England which centuries ago sent a crusade against Islam, and some English people embracing Islam. But more than Islam, the religion of Buddha is appealing to the people of Europe. Only the other day a learned European spoke to an Indian that the future religion of Europe would be "some form of Buddhism." In his article on "The Buddhist Home" in German by Ralf Henkel and translated by Daya for the benefit of the readers of the *British Buddhist*, we obtain some idea of the position of Buddhism in Europe today.

"Today Europe has ten thousand followers of the Buddha." He says, "Almost all the doctrines of the Buddha are translated into German and propagated in even translations—a work of culture, which is envied by the experts of other nations. In Vienna and Berlin there are people who prepare themselves to go to those lands where Buddhism is kept in its pure and original form (Ceylon, Burma and Siam) to live the life of Buddhist monks. A huge Buddhist Library was founded in Siam, whose king is the Patron of Buddhism. In Ceylon and Rangoon colonies of German Buddhist Monks have been formed. Even in Europe different endeavours are noticeable whose chief aim is to make it possible for the people of the West to lead the highest and Natural Moral life, which Buddhism teaches. Even in the island of Capri there lives a Buddhist Community. Shortly a large Buddhist Church will be built in London. There is a similar establishment in Denmark." Nor is this all. Under the patronage of the Soviet Government preparations are now being made for the establishment of an Academy for the study of Buddhism in Leningrad.

We welcome these changes. Religion is a matter of the individual and man must have full liberty to follow his conscience. Said the sages of India एकं सत् विधाः बहुधा वदन्ति. "That which exists is one sages call it variously." Only when this is realised and life regulated to fall in with it that peace and good will can reign on earth.

NEWS AND REPORTS

MAHASAMADHI

Srimat Swami Saradananda, the venerable Secretary of the Ramakrishna Mission, has passed away. From our midst has been suddenly removed a towering personality of rare spiritual attainments, a most loving teacher and leader who, with wonderful tact, patience and devotion, guided the growth and activities of the Ramakrishna Mission ever since its inception more than quarter of a century back.

Endowed with a remarkable spirit of selflessness and sacrifice possessed of a mighty heart overflowing with love and sympathy, the Swami was ever ready to bear the burden of others, and gave to a large number of world-weary and struggling souls the solace and protection which they sought in vain in other quarters. We are overwhelmed by the keen sense of loss sustained by us, both personally and collectively, in the demise of the illustrious Swami. His noble and dignified personality, grave and steady, calm and peaceful, be-speaking the natural depth of his soul and a wonderful combination of all the highest qualities of head and heart, of knowledge and devotion, work and meditation will be missed not only by ourselves, but also by his innumerable disciples, devotees and admirers to whom his presence was a perennial source of peace and blessedness.

The Swami was one of the few blessed souls who along with their chief, Swami Vivekananda, sat at the feet of their Divine Master, Sri Ramakrishna, and learned from him the ways to God-realisation and service. And later on he proved to be one of the greatest apostles of Hinduism not only in India, but also in America where he won the admiration of all who came in close touch with him by his charming manners, deep erudition and impressive lectures and class-talks.

The Swami was suffering from various ailments for sometime past. Of late he showed some signs of improvement which turned to be but the forerunner of the approaching end. After his usual meditation in the evening of the 6th August, he had a sudden attack of apoplexy. In spite of the best medical aid, he did not regain his consciousness, and entered into Mahasamadhi at 2-34 A.M. on the 19th August. Followed by a huge procession, the Swami's body was brought in the morning from Baghbazaar, Calcutta where he was staying, to Belur Math, and was consecrated to the fire on the banks of the Holy Ganges.

At the end of his life-long labour the great worker has been called to rest. From the mundane world he has gone to the abode of Immortality and Bliss. But as an ideal monk and religious preceptor, whose central theme of life was Divine realisation, stern renunciation and loving service, as the inspired author of the immortal biography of his Master, the *Sri Ramakrishna Leelaprasanga*, the most authentic, scholarly and philosophical work on the subject, as one of the dynamic personalities who brought the Ramakrishna Mission into being, nourished it with their life's blood and developed it into a great organisation with nearly a hundred branches in India and abroad, Swami Saradananda's memory will continue to be a source of inspiration and strength to those whom he has left behind, nay, it will be ever cherished by posterity with sincere admiration and heartfelt devotion. May his spirit abide with us for ever!

Om Shantih ! Shantih !! Shantih !!!

SWAMI SHARVANANDA AT SIMLA

After founding a centre of the Ramakrishna Order at Delhi in May last the Swami Sharvananda left for Simla where he stayed for two months. During his stay there he delivered a series of lectures in English and Bengali on diverse religious subjects as "God, Soul and Matter," "The Message of the Universal Religion," "Law of Karma," "Mayavada," "Secret of Worship," etc. The Swami's lectures were very much appreciated and have evoked great enthusiasm among the people there.

SWAMI NIRMALANANDAJI AT MADRAS

After a few months' stay at the Sri Ramakrishna Math, Trivandrum, Swami Nirmalanandaji, President of the Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bangalore arrived at Madras on Sunday, the 14th August on his way to Calcutta.

The Swami acceded to the request of some of the devotees to have a religious *conversazione* instead of the usual class held at the Math every Sunday evening. The talk of the evening centered on Bhakti. In the course of the talk the Swamiji pointed that the real Bhakta did not care for worldly gains or worldly loss, but was one, who wholly resting in the Lord looked upon himself as the son of the Lord and thereby becoming completely fearless, did not shudder, like the Jnani, at the miseries of the world. The Bhakta was therefore prepared to take any number of births and undergo all kinds of sufferings in order that he may enjoy the presence of the Lord within and without. He never wanted like the Jnani to merge himself in Brahman and put an end to the joys and sorrows incidental to human birth. So the Bhakta was a real hero and quoting the instance of Hanuman, the greatest of Bhaktas, he showed that he was even superior to the Jnani. In fact the true Bhakta, never possessed a slave mentality as was generally supposed. On the other hand he always carried a heroic will.

After the clearing a few doubts raised by the devotees the class dispersed. The Swamiji left for Calcutta the very same night.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION, OOTY

A very interesting function took place on Wednesday, the 10th August in the presence of a large gathering when the Ramakrishna Mission branch at Ootacamund, received a free gift of the handsome Panchakshara hall from messrs P. M. Sadasiva Mudaliar, P. M. Guruswami Mudaliar, P. M. Pasupati Mudaliar and P. M. Raja Bahadur Mudaliar—the wealthy Indian planters of the Nilgiris. The hall which is situated close to the main bazaar is a decent building where religious discourses could regularly be delivered for the benefit of the townspeople. The object of the function was to hand over the title-deeds of this property formally to Swami Yatiswarananda, President of the Ramakrishna Mission, Madras, who had gone there for the purpose.

During the function another timely gift came from the hands of the Maharaja of Jodhpur. The Maharaja sent a sum of Rs. 4000 in addition to Rs. 1000 already given towards meeting the expenses for putting up the habitation for the Mission at Ooty recognising thereby the Mission, work and his Highness's interest in the welfare of the Hindus inhabiting the hills.

LECTURES BY SWAMI YATISWARANANDA

Under the auspices of the Sri Ramakrishna Ashram, Ootacamund, Swami Yatiswarananda, President, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras, delivered a series of three lectures, one at the Ashram and the other two at the Panchakshara Hall on the 14th, 21st and 28th August. The subjects of his address were, "The Goal of Life," "The Message of Sri Ramakrishna" and "Varnashrama Dharma" respectively. The lectures were very much appreciated by the audience.

SWAMI RAGHAVANANDA'S ARRIVAL FROM AMERICA

Swami Raghavananda of the Vedanta Society, Ramakrishna Mission, New York, U.S.A. arrived at the Sri Ramakrishna

Math, Madras, from Colombo, on the morning of the 23rd August last, after a stay of four years in America. Early in June last, he left America and came to London, where he stayed for sometime. In London he spoke on several occasions to small groups of people and held classes on Hindu religion and philosophy. In Holland he stayed a few days with a friend and spoke on one occasion to a small group on Vedanta. In Berlin, Prof. Glasenapp of the Berlin University, invited him to take one of his lectures in the Oriental Seminary. And there the Swami spoke to an audience of students and professors on "Yoga and its Relation to Indian life." Prof. Glasenapp who presided, translated the lecture in German for those who did not understand English. Then passing through France and after a few days' stay at Paris, he took boat at Marseilles and reached Colombo on the 20th August. In Colombo Swamis Vipulananda and Avinashananda met him and he stayed with them for some time and spoke on the day he left, to friends and members of the Vivekananda Society, Colombo, on the message of Vedanta in the West.

SWAMI RAMAKRISHNANANDA'S BIRTHDAY

The Birthday of Swami Ramakrishnananda which came off on Thursday, the 25th of August was ceremoniously observed at the Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore. The programme of the day included special Puja and Bhajana.

The Ramakrishna students' Home founded by Swami Ramakrishnananda, observed with solemnity their founder's day. There was special puja and Bhajana by the boys of the Home. Swami Raghavananda who happened to be in Madras en-route to Calcutta from America spoke to the boys in the morning on the Life of the Swami Ramakrishnananda. In the evening also Swami Raghavananda gave an address to the new graduates of the Home on the Duties and Responsibilities of their life.

RAMAKRISHNA TAPOBAN, DHARACHOLA -AN APPEAL

Situated in the heart of the Himalayas, out of the reach of civilisation the above Ashram has been rendering a signal service to the poor illiterate inhabitants of the locality. Through the kind help of some Bhutia merchants it has started a free residential school and a charitable dispensary; but for want of funds the activity of the Ashram is greatly handicapped. At present the Ashram requires two buildings, one for the school and the other for the accomodation of the workers and students—the cost of which is estimated at Rs. 5000. The charitable dispensary also needs sufficient medicine and other medical necessities.

The Ashram appeals to the generous public for extending their helping hand. We hope all benevolent people will contribute liberally and enable the workers to be of greater service to the country.

Contributions, however small, will be thankfully received by Swami Anubhavananda, Secretary, Ramakrishna Tapoban, Dharachola, P. O. Dt. Almora, U.P.

THE VEDANTA KESARI

"Let the lion of Vedanta roar."

"Let me tell you, strength is what we want
And the first step in getting strength is to uphold
The Upanishads and believe that 'I am the Atman.'"

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

VOLUME XIV]

OCTOBER 1927

[NUMBER 6

PRAYER.

ॐ

नमस्ते शरण्ये शिवे सानुकम्प्यं
नमस्ते जगद्व्यापिके विश्वरूपे ।
नमस्ते जगद्वन्द्यपादशरविन्दं
नमस्त जगत्तारिणि त्राहिदुर्गे ॥
अनाथस्य दीनस्य वृष्णातुरस्य
भयार्तस्य भीतस्य बद्धस्य जन्तोः ।
त्वमेका गतिर्दीवि निस्तारदात्री
नमस्ते जगत्तारिणि त्राहिदुर्गे ॥

O Goddess Durga ! Thou Who art Ever-blissful, Ever-compassionate, Thou Who pervadeth the whole universe and assumeth the universal form, to Thee my salutations. Thou Whose lotus feet the universe worshippingeth, Thou Who art the Liberator of the universe itself, to Thee my salutations. Thou, Eternal Refuge ! I seek refuge in Thee.

O Goddess Durga ! Thou Who art the Saviour of the poor and the helpless, Thou Who art the Protector of the terror-stricken and the afflicted, Thou Who art the Resort of the thirsty and the bound, to Thee my salutations. Thou Who art the Sole-giver of emancipation, Thou Who art the Liberator of 'the universe itself, to Thee my salutations ! Thou, Eternal Refuge ! I Seek refuge in Thee.

VISWASARA TANTRA.

SPIRITUAL TALKS OF SWAMI BRAHMANANDA

(Continued from page 165)

Three things are essential for the realisation of God—human birth, desire for salvation and company of holy men. By the grace of God you have got all these three. Now make the best use of these rare opportunities and attain the supreme object of human birth. What is the good of running after fleeting pleasures when you can attain eternal peace and happiness? Renouncing everything you have taken refuge at His lotus feet with the noble aspiration of realising Him; see therefore that your life is not spent in vain. Remember this thing, my boy, it is possible to be born again as man and have the spiritual hankering as well, but I can assure you, that the company of such holy men (disciples of Sri Ramakrishna) as you enjoy now is your rare privilege and you cannot expect to have it always. The blessing of the holy company as this comes to one as a result of great merit, accumulated during many births. Therefore I enjoin on you to make the best use of this opportunity instead of wasting your life in worthless pursuits.

Faith and intense faith in the words of your Guru will make everything easy for you. Without this all forms and rituals of a religion are simply useless. So surrender yourself absolutely to your preceptor as does a kitten to its mother. He will then look after you and provide you with everything; yours is only to have the simple faith in him alone.

How far can your intellect go? He who has taken your burden on himself, has his sense of responsibility, and feels anxious for your welfare much more than you do. He will save you from all dangers and difficulties.

No evil can befall a faithful disciple who is under the protecting wings of the Guru.

Men will surely go wrong so long as they do not realise God. But if they surrender themselves to the Guru, the chances of committing error will evidently be much less than what would be otherwise. Remember Sri Ramakrishna's parable of the father and the son walking over narrow ridges across the field. If the father himself takes hold of the son's hand, there is no fear of the latter slipping off his feet ; but if the son tries to take hold of the father's arm there is a chance of his falling down. Let those who have got the grace of their competent Guru rest content leaving it to him to cure them of all their defects.

And renunciation being the *Sine quo non* for attaining peace and happiness everything should be given up for the sake of God. Unbroken Brahmacharya (continence) is also what is most required of one seeking for the Lord. Man without continence is as good as an animal. Discrimination is the line of demarkation between man and brute. Man can realise God if he strives for it but the brute cannot. The latter is a complete slave of the senses. And a man who is ruled by passions is no better than a brute.

If you wish to possess real peace and happiness and taste joy and cheerfulness in this very life hold fast to God giving up all. Don't think that renunciation consists in wandering about with a pair of tongs in hand and smearing the body all over with ashes. The outward marks of Tyaga (renunciation) meant only for show bring no good ; they are on the other hand most harmful. Real renunciation consists in the complete surrender of one's self to the will of God. Pray to Him saying : " My Lord ! my body, my mind and everything are Thine own ; Thou mayest use them as Thou wilt." Have you not heard that Sri Ramakrishna knew

nothing but the Divine Mother, and that whatever he did was according to Her will and guidance ? So always pray to God, "Lord, I do not know what is good and what is bad ; I am merely Thy servant and let Thy will be done." Struggle incessantly to make this attitude permanent. If you surrender yourself completely unto God, He will get done through you all that is needful. Therefore pray, ever pray to Him and take shelter at his feet. One thing more I like to impress upon your mind. Whether you are praised or blamed, whether you are honoured or insulted, whether there be a place in the world for you or no and lastly whether your body stands or falls, now that you have understood that the end and aim of human life is to realise God, do not swerve even an inch from this ideal. Say with a firm determination : "I must realise God here and now at any cost."

It is only when you can cast your life in this mould, can you be a man and a true and worthy child of Sri Ramakrishna. Your *Sat-Sanga* (company of holy men) will then bear fruit and you will be blessed. Otherwise your life would be a waste ; and between you and a brute there would be no difference. You will not deserve to be called a worthy son of Sri Ramakrishna.

One other point which I wish you to bear in mind always is this. Ordinary people understand by the term Guru, a person who whispers some Mantram into the ear of the disciple. They do not care to know whether he possesses all the qualifications of a true preceptor. But to-day such a conception is loosing ground. It is now being recognised that none but a realised soul is qualified to be a spiritual teacher. He who does not know the path himself cannot show it to others. Mantras are to-day as potent as ever ; but those who trade in spiritual lore are ignorant of the rules governing them and they themselves are not able to make any real

progress. Much less therefore their disciples and hence they cannot obtain real peace and happiness.

Sri Ramakrishna has turned the tide. And the most invaluable spiritual gems are to be found in his disciples. All faithful devotees wherever they may be must necessarily be drawn to them ; for true peace and happiness can be obtained from them alone. Those who have got the blessings of the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna are really fortunate. And if they can with firm faith and steadfast devotion follow them who are the children of the great Master, they will surely attain to the Supreme Bliss, the goal of human life. These great followers of Sri Ramakrishna are the custodians of the spirit of the age. They know full well the various paths of spiritual Sadhana suited to the time. They instruct those who go to them for spirituality in a manner suited to their spiritual evolution. Initiation they have given to some in a formal manner, to some others in the form of spiritual talks and to others in dreams. Proceed along the path which has been your good fortune to be blessed with. Pray to your Guru with the faith of a child and he will certainly do all that is needful. He is the best Guru, who, whether his physical body stands or falls, will see that everyone of his disciples attains liberation. The speciality of this age is that even after the disappearance of his physical body, the Guru appears in flesh to his disciples to guide and bless them.

Strive and struggle ceaselessly. Shake off all doubts and plunge yourself in your Sadhana to realise and make your own what you have learnt from your Guru. Let not spiritual practices be done for show, or to catch the public eye ; but follow them silently and steadily, so that even your neighbours might not know of them. There may be people who might ridicule you or shake your faith ; there may be others who by their

praise and respect for you, increase your egotism. Therefore always bear in mind this great teaching of Sri Ramakrishna: "Meditate in your mind, in the forest or in a quiet corner". The meaning of this is that all your Sadhana must be done in strict privacy that others may not come to know of it. If you steadily practise like this for some time even, you will find what great joy and bliss come to you. You will be a changed man altogether. You who have renounced the world in His name, therefore say with all firmness: "Realise Him I must, now and in this very life." Yes, let this be the supreme aim in life. You have got the blessings of a real Guru and you are bound to succeed. There can not be, my child, the least doubt about it.

EDITORIAL NOTES

Crisis of Christian Missions in China

Christian missions are passing through a great crisis in China. With the rise of the tide of nationalism the Chinese have come to look upon the foreign missionaries as stumbling blocks in the way of their national self-realisation. The "yellow heathens" seem to have lost all faith in the "white Christians" who seem to be more anxious to save the souls of others from eternal perdition than their own. They have found out to their horror that if they want to have the Bible they must lose all their lands. If they are to become meek, as they are asked to be by the missionary, instead of inheriting the earth, as Christ promises, they will have to disinherit even their own hearth and home. At the recognition of this national danger, even a large number of Chinese Christians are anxious to free themselves from their foreign and "foreign-protected" religion. And many among the vast majority of the Chinese people, who are true to their ancestral faith, have come to regard Christianity as a "memorising art" used by the Western imperialists on weakminded persons, "making them lose control of their faculties and receive indignities while unconscious." No wonder then that the Chinese as a nation have been actuated by a great antagonism towards the entire Christian missionary move-

ment which they think to be a part of the political game of the aggressive Western nations. In consequence hundreds of missionaries, religious, educational and medical, have been forced to leave China. Some have resigned their service which, though profitable, has become fraught with danger. Some again are returning home on furlough, while others are being transferred to neighbouring countries. Innumerable churches, schools and hospitals have been closed. The entire missionary movement in China has been completely disorganised, and there seems to be little chance of its resuming its widespread activities as before. The Chinese Leviathan was not dead as many of the Western nations fondly believed. It was only asleep, and has now awakened, refreshed and strengthened by its prolonged rest. And it is determined to free its homestead from the foreign aggressors and exploiters who have endangered not only its religious culture but also its political and economic freedom.

The Missionary Movement in China

It is an undeniable fact that the Christian missions have rendered great service to China in various ways. Through their schools and colleges they have introduced modern education and modern thought. Their hospitals and dispensaries, orphanages and widows' homes, leper asylums and institutions for the deaf and the dumb, their schools for training Chinese students in medicine and nursing have introduced modern methods of alleviating human misery and suffering in many parts of the country. The missionaries have also been the chief interpreters of Chinese life and thought to the West. But they again have been guilty of being the worst enemies of the Chinese civilisation. In their schools in China they have decried the national culture of the land, its literature and arts, its ethics and religion. With a view to raise large sums of money to carry on their work in China, they have also carried on an organised propaganda depicting Chinese life in its worst colours, and creating pity and sympathy in the minds of the kind but ignorant men and women in the West. Even to this the Chinese do not attach any great importance. In their eyes the greatest offence of the missionaries has been their alliance with the political and commercial interests of their respective countries. True, the Christian priests from the West are dominated by race consciousness and preach an extreme form of religious imperialism which is anxious to see the destruction of all other religions not only in China but also in the whole world, both Eastern and Western. The Chinese with their proverbial tolerance are

prepared to brook even this. But what they cannot bear to see is the unholy union of religious imperialism, with the political and economic imperialism so dangerous to their solidarity as a nation. It is this that they are determined to put an end to at any cost.

The Main Cause of the Crisis

Whatever might have been the ideal of the early Christian missionaries in China, those who followed them have allowed themselves to become instruments in the hands of political and commercial powers. Knowingly or unknowingly the missionaries have led the trader into unexplored and unexploited lands. And on the plea of protecting religion and trade, foreign governments have sent their gunboats to these regions and deprived the helpless Chinese of their valuable lands and natural resources. The missionaries have thus become in many cases the "advance agents" of Western imperialism, and have also been amply rewarded for their services. They enjoy along with all foreign residents the special privileges under the so-called "treaty rights" wrung from the Chinese Government by Western powers. They also possess the right to travel and reside in the interior away from the so-called "treaty ports," the right to purchase or lease property in the interior and other rights not shared by the representatives of non-Christian religions such as Buddhism and Mohammedanism in China. It is but natural that China should become deadly antagonistic towards the "gun boat treaties" and those who enjoy them to her great shame and humiliation. The Chinese deprived of their valuable seaports, tariff autonomy and other sovereign rights have become suspicious of all Westerners, missionary and non-missionary. It is impossible for them to forget that both Christianity and opium were forced on them by Western brute force, and if they "were free to abstain from Christianity, as from opium, they were not free to prohibit them." The so-called anti-Christian movement in China is the natural consequence of what the Christian nations of the West have done in China in the name of furthering the cause of civilisation and religion.

Future of Christian Missions in China

What the future of the Christian missions in China is likely to be is difficult to prophesy. It will, however, depend on the attitude of both the people of China and the missionaries from the West. Different groups of Chinese hold different ideas about Christianity. The extreme nationalists are strongly antagonistic towards it as they consider its missionaries to be tools of imperia-

lism. Another group of Chinese oppose it because they think it to be suited only to the uncultured and undeveloped minds. Others are against it as they look upon it as "irrational, unscientific and unnecessary". Some are indifferent; some also are tolerant towards it. Some appreciate it as a movement that wants to better the world. While some again welcome it, and more than the religion its missionaries who help them during times of famine, epidemic and other calamities. "I think", says an American missionary who worked for many years in China, "the attitude can be summed up by saying that the Christian messenger, who comes with a spiritual message, humbly and co-operatively to live among the people, will always be welcome throughout China. The Chinese are instinctively tolerant and hospitable to the true religious worker. He must, of course, be wholly rid of all political and commercial associations". Events in China are bringing about a great change in the mind of the missionaries. Many among them are coming to hold that the Christian Church should cease to be a foreign institution if it wants to live and thrive on the soil of China. They declare that the missionary should no longer be anxious to be the recipient of treaty privileges, be ready to serve under Chinese Government, give more administrative power to the Chinese workers and "above all he must minimise official status and emphasise personal service, showing a passion of friendship." This changed attitude is already manifesting itself in the working of some of the Christian educational institutions in China, which according to the Government demand have abolished the compulsory religious instruction of its pupils. There is no doubt that the Christian missionaries in so far as they are imbued with the spirit of selfless service will ever be in demand in China as elsewhere like the true missionaries of all other religions in the world.

Christian Missions in India

The revolutionary events in China have a unique significance to the Christian missionaries in India. As in China, so in India, they have done both great good and evil to its people though it may not be exactly in the same way and to the same extent. Through their educational and charitable institutions they have rendered invaluable service to India in spreading education and mitigating sufferings. But they have been at the same time the greatest opponents of Indian religion and culture. The average Christian preacher who is as biassed as ignorant about Indian religion speaks of it as nothing but a mass of childish superstition

and gross immorality. The educational missionary, under the cover of secular instruction, tries to undermine the cultural life of the student. He speaks in the most damaging terms of India's time-honoured institutions and heroes and the ideals they represent. He paints to him what he thinks to be the darkest aspect of Indian civilisation and at the same time the brightest side of Western culture which, however, as he wants others to believe, is not synonymous with Christianity. The medical missionary who usually comes in touch mostly with the lowest strata of Indian society and with the darkest side of their character, thinks these to be representative of the entire Indian people, high and low. And he rushes to describe the Indians, men and women, in the filthiest possible terms in the use of which he seems to have acquired a special proficiency. Referring to these mean slanderers of India, who seem to have a great attraction for the gross and the immoral, observes Sister Nivedita in righteous anger—"It seems as if to them nothing had been sacred. In all lands, doctors, and clergymen see the misfortunes of the home, and professional honour keeps their lips sealed. But here all has been put upon the market. Medical records (always unpleasant reading) have been detailed in public, from platform and pulpit. And the professional consideration that ought to have prevented such dishonour only intervenes, if at all, to forbid the use of speaker's names in connection with statements made by them in full publicity to large audiences." Besides, misusing India's hospitality and tolerance, the missionaries and semi-missionaries have created a vast mass of "Christian literature" which depicts the Hindu religion as "a weltering chaos of terror, darkness and uncertainty," and the Hindus as a people who follow this religion "without definite commandments, without a moral code, without a God", and who seem to have made a special monopoly of all the most horrible social evils existing on the face of the earth. It is significant that very few in India care at all for these books save probably the tourists and globe trotters who, as is generally the case, come here only to misunderstand and if possible misinterpret the great Indian people and their civilisation. These precious books are lying on the shelves of societies like the Christian Literature Society of India. If ever the Christian missionaries, who by their unscrupulous actions have forfeited the sympathy of the educated Indians, be ever anxious to get it back, they must first of all consume to ashes all this mass of abomination that disgraces alike the English and the vernacular languages of India.

Lessons from China

The missionaries have stood opposed not only to the religion and civilisation of the Indians but also to their legitimate national aspirations. Almost all missionary bodies look upon India's struggle for self-government with an eye of suspicion and disfavour. Apart from the imperial and racial bias, the one consideration that seems to weigh with them is the fear that a free India will not be prepared to encourage and render financial support to any alien organisation whose chief function is to wean the children of the soil from their ancient culture and civilisation. The cataclysmic happenings in China should be an eye-opener to the Christian missionaries in India. As in China, so in India, they stand not for social solidarity but for disintegration. Members of alien nations and countries, they ever want to remain as foreigners, and tend to make the Indian Christians and others coming into the spell of their influence strangers in their own lands, out of touch with the formative forces of life around them. But realising the gravity of the evil, the thoughtful among the Indian Christians are decidedly turning more than ever to their motherland and to her ancient heritage. With this change in their outlook, the attitude of the saner among the missionaries is also undergoing unexpected modification. They are taking note of the new spirit and are anxious to avert the repetition of the Chinese catastrophe in India. Some of them have already changed their method of wholesale condemnation to one of "Sympathetic treatment" of Indian culture and found in it "much that is too precious to be lost and also much that is useless and distinctly unhealthy." This is decidedly a change for the better although it is not all that could be desired. But greater transformations are going to take place in the near future. If the Christian missionaries want to work in India they must fulfil and not destroy. And to do this they must first of all come in touch with the soul of India, especially through those who embody in their lives its highest ideals. Like all other cultures Hindu culture too has its defects and merits. If the missionaries come to study India with a captious mind and with the supercilious spirit of an arrogant critic they will find here immorality and superstition which as a matter of fact exists more or less in all the countries of the world. But if on the other hand, they come with a purity of purpose and with the inquiring spirit of a sincere student, they will be struck to witness in India a purity and holiness, an idealism and spirituality that they may seek elsewhere but cannot find. It is for them to decide what they want. And it is for

them again to choose whether they should be evil agencies for dividing the Indian and Western nations by their propaganda of calumny or be a beneficent force for bringing about the happy union of these people by their faithful representation of the highest ideals of both India and the West. If they take up the former function the time is sure to come when they will have to face a calamity much greater and more disastrous than what has taken place in China. If they choose the latter they will always be welcomed by the people of India as a power for doing good, and by the leaders of Indian thought as fellow workers for establishing peace on earth and good will among men of all races and nationalities. But their spirit of service must be perfectly selfless and sincere.

The New Ideal of Service

As in China, so in India there is at present a clear dislike for the Christian missionary and his religion. The Indians strongly disapprove of the missionary propaganda of misrepresentation of India in Western lands and that of denationalisation in India itself. They have become tired of hearing of the glory of the Christian religion which the preachers want to try on Indians, but do not practice themselves in their own lives. In spite of the scrupulous attempts of the missionary to paint the Westerners at their best and hide the darker side of their life, educated Indians have found out the real truth as Rev. Charles, W. Gilkey, the last Barrows lecturer to India, has very frankly acknowledged—"With the white man money has been the most important consideration, and religion neglected and forgotten. India is beginning to look askance at the Christianity presented to it in the Occidental garb, wrapped up in Western paper, and addressed in a Western hand. The Orient has heard enough of theories about the Christian religion, and now desires to learn how much of that religion is practised by the Occidentals." Religion the Indians have enough and to spare; they do not feel the necessity of borrowing it from the Westerners. But what they need most urgently is real social service that must not be made subservient to any worldly gain or achievement. If they assumed an attitude of antagonism towards the Christian movement, it is because they want it, in the apt words of an Indian Christian writer, Mr. John Jesudason Cornelius, "to disentangle itself from all its political complications, to substitute disinterested service for proselytizing as its motive, to seek to supplement and not to supplant, to be domestic and not

foreign, to be concerned more with life and less with dogma." In case the missionaries want to render selfless service, they will find infinite scope for it in India. They may feed the hungry, heal the sick, clothe the naked, educate the illiterate, and ameliorate the pitiable condition of India's teeming millions in many ways. But this they should do without disturbing their religious and social life, without entertaining any thought of conversion and of increasing the so called Christian fold. In place of the old ideal of interested service, let them now take up a higher and nobler form of service without making any distinctions of race and religion, without trying in any way to convert those that belong to an alien faith. Each act of service, whether physical, intellectual or spiritual, let them learn to regard as service not to man but to the God-in-man. As Swami Vivekananda puts it, "The poor, the illiterate, the ignorant, the afflicted—let these be your God. Know that service to these alone is the highest good . . . Blessed are we that we are given the privilege of working for him, not of helping him. Cut out this word "help" from your mind . . . You worship. Stand in that reverent attitude to the whole universe." If the Christian missionaries want to work in India, sooner or later, they will have to take up this Vedantic ideal of service. Whether they will do it out of their own goodness or out of compulsion from outside, it is for them and their supporters to decide,

A TALK TO STUDENTS

By Swami Atulananda

(Continued from the last issue)

Now there is a third point I wish to bring to your notice, that may prove helpful not only in your studies, but also in your after life, and that is the necessity of acquiring the power to concentrate the mind. "If I had to begin my life all over again," Swami Vivekananda once said, "I would from the very beginning practise concentration of mind." A mind that can concentrate can penetrate all things, can acquire all knowledge, can solve all problems. The power of concentration of mind is another secret to success.

"Truth," the Upanishad says, "concealed in all living beings does not shine. But it is seen by subtle seers with keen intellects, who know how to concentrate their minds."

The value of the power to concentrate the mind on the work one undertakes to do, was once illustrated in the life of the

Pandava brothers. Dronacharya had trained the young princes in the art of shooting. One day he wanted to examine them to see how far they had progressed. An artificial bird was placed on the branch of a tree. Then the princes were told to shoot through the eye of the bird. It was a very difficult feat indeed. But they all wanted to try. First came Sahadeva. He placed an arrow on his bow, and began to aim at the bird. But before he let go the arrow, Dronacharya asked, "Sahadeva, what do you see?" "I see the tree and the branch, and the bird on the branch," the young prince replied. "Enough!", Dronacharya exclaimed, "you need not shoot." Then came Nakul. He also aimed. And when asked what he saw, he replied, "I see the branch of the tree and the bird on the branch." He also was not allowed to shoot. Now Bhima came. The same question was asked. "I see the bird," Bhima replied. He was also dismissed. Then Yudhistira came. "What do you see?" Dronacharya asked. "I see the head of the bird," was the reply. "Very well," Dronacharya said, "you need not shoot." Now Arjuna alone was left. He came and aimed. "What do you see, Arjuna?", the old teacher asked anxiously. "Sir," Arjuna replied, "I see only the eye of the bird." "Shoot!" Dronacharya exclaimed. And when Arjuna let go the arrow it pierced the eye of the bird.

Of the five brothers, Arjuna alone knew perfectly how to concentrate his mind. The eye of the bird was his aim, and while his brothers saw the bird, and the branch and the tree, he did not even see the head, he saw only the eye in the head of the bird. The wise teacher knew that the others would have failed because their minds went beyond the mark. For the senses are only the instruments of the mind. Because the mind was not concentrated, the eye also wavered, and the hand could not be steady.

Whatever we do we should do with heart and soul with all our might and strength, be it study, or play, or our religious devotions. What is our aim? That is the first question. That settled, let us be Eka-nistha, one pointed, always moving forward towards the goal. Looking neither to the right nor to the left, we must push onward to reach our goal, not resting till the goal is reached, never wavering.

Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna taught this same idea in a simple, little story. A farmer was irrigating his land. He worked all day but the water had not yet reached his fields. Towards evening his wife came and said, "My dear, you have worked all day, now

come home, take your food and rest. To-morrow there is another day." The husband responded, put aside his spade and went home. But when to-morrow came his harvest was spoiled for lack of water. Another farmer was also irrigating his fields, but when *his* wife came he scolded her, "Don't you know we will starve if our harvest fails?" He finished his task, and not until then did he go home to eat and rest. His crops were saved. Here was tenacity of purpose which is possible only for a controlled mind.

The quality of concentration of mind proper we find strongly represented in the Yogis of India who pierce the veil of Maya through one pointed meditation when all the powers of the mind are focussed on one single thought.

How far this may go we find illustrated in the life of Saint Francis of Assisi, the Italian monk. It is said that one day he travelled on an ass, led by a brother monk. They passed through a little town where the people came out with song and music to do honour to the Saint. But Saint Francis's mind was firmly fixed on God. He knew not where he was, or what went on around him. It was only when his companion stopped the animals and lifted him down from the ass that Francis came to his external senses again.

Concentration of mind is also practised in the West, even in business, where men have to come to quick and important decisions. These men see in a flash all the pros and cons when difficult problems are placed before them. Such men reach the highest step in the ladder of success. They become the leaders, the foremost men in whatever occupation they may be engaged. The greatest inventor of our age is an American, Mr. Edison. Of him it is said that when he wants to work out a problem he locks himself in his room, and no one is allowed to disturb him. There he sits for long hours, sometimes for days and nights for getting his surroundings, forgetting the demands of the body—food and drink and sleep—his mind occupied with his new invention. Of Beethoven, the great pianist, it is said that when he sat at his piano he did not see or hear anything that went on around him. His mind was occupied solely with his composition, and he became one of the greatest musicians of his time. Such men know how to bring out a part of the perfection that is in every man.

But to concentrate the mind is difficult. It must be practised faithfully, as we are told by Sri Krishna, in the Bhagavad Gita. "Without doubt, O mighty-armed, the mind is restless, and difficult to control ; but through practice it may be governed."

There is an amusing story of a man who thought he could control his mind. Two travellers met at an inn. One was on horseback, the other on foot. During their talk the one who came on foot began to brag of his ability to concentrate his mind on any given subject. The other did not believe him, so they decided on a wager. The horse-man staked his horse, the other put up a sum of money. The test was simple. The boaster had to count to one hundred with concentrated mind. He began — one, two, three, four, and so on. But when he came to thirty, he suddenly stopped and asked, does the saddle go with the horse ? Of course, he lost the bet.

What is the source of perfection ? It is our own true self, the Atman in every being. All knowledge, all strength all power, is locked up within ourselves. The object of education is to teach us how to unlock the gate of knowledge, strength and power locked up within ourselves. The object of education is to teach us how to unlock that gate, that knowledge, strength and power may manifest through us.

"The entrance of the True," the Isopanishad tells us, "is obstructed by a golden disk." We must pierce through the disk. With concentrated mind we must pierce through all obstructing thoughts, that we may reach the truth, the truth of science, the truth of religion, the truth, in every walk in life.

"God created the senses out-going," another Upanishad says, "therefore one sees outside, the surface of things, and not the truth within. Some intelligent man turned his mind inward, and there beheld the truth."

Learn to turn your mind inward, think deeply, meditate with concentrated mind, and all problems will reveal their secrets. With that power developed you are certain to become great, successful men in whatever you may undertake.

This truth also was recognized in the old days in the forest universities. The students were taught to think for themselves, to dive deep within their own minds, from these to bring to the surface nuggets of wisdom that no external study can produce.

In one respect study has been made too easy in our modern methods of education. The student does not have to think, his questions are answered at once, or, if not answered are found in books of reference. The student does not have to dig within himself, the food is dished up all prepared.

But the ancient Rishis would not have it this way. They knew that what was easily gotten was easily forgotten. Only that for which we have to labour we can appreciate and guard as a great treasure. There is no satisfaction in superficial knowledge. Only that which flashes up from within our own minds satisfies. A flash of knowledge from within brings true illumination; not any knowledge acquired from outside.

This is the fourth point I wish to impress you with: learn to think for yourselves. Don't be parrots who can only repeat what they have been taught to say. Be original. Think independently. Carve out careers for yourself, strike out into new directions, create new openings.

India needs men of original ideas; bold, strong, righteous, energetic men. Look at your Dr. Bose, Dr. Roy, Dr. Seal, Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi,—these are all thinkers, and thinking has made them great. "Young men of India," the Swami Vivekananda called out, "in you is my hope, my faith, my expectation."

Don't be satisfied simply by getting your university diploma. It is only then that your real life begins; it is only then that you must show what the university has done for you. The student life is only the life of preparation.

Let me tell you how formerly students in India were trained to think for themselves. When a Brahmacharin asked a question the Guru did not give an immediate reply, he only threw out a hint to put the student on the right track, and then he told him to go and ferret it out for himself. And the youth would go away sometimes for years and think and meditate, till at last the answer flashed from within. The student's question is answered by his own mind if only he understands how to knock at the door of knowledge. But now-a-days we are so impatient, we are so spoiled that we want to get knowledge at once, in an easy way. We don't like to think. We forget that true conviction comes only from within.

There is no greater satisfaction than to have our problems solved by our own minds. Every answer from within brings

exaltation, while answers received 'from outside leave us cold and unmoved. First listen to truth, then think about it, then meditate on it, then realize it. This is the process given in your scriptures.

Impatient students there have always been. In one of the oldest Upanishads we get the story of such a student. He came to his Guru, and said, "Revered Sir, teach me truth." The teacher told him that Truth was deep hidden in the cave of the heart. The student was not satisfied, "Sir," he said, "show me the truth even as one shows a horse or a cow." He was impatient, he did not want to labour to get truth, he did not want to think. What did the Guru reply? "My son," he said, "you cannot see the seer of sight, go and meditate on truth. The senses cannot reveal it, none sees it with the eye. By the intellect controlling the mind, and by constant meditation it is revealed"

In the *Chhandogya Upanishad* the story is told of a student who through patient meditation learned the truth. Satyakama having gone to the great sage Gautama, said, "I wish to become a Brahmachari with you Sir; may I approach you?" Gautama replied, "O friend, I shall initiate thee." Having initiated him, the Guru chose four hundred lean and weak cows, and said to Satyakama: "Go with these into the forest, and return when the number of cows has increased to one thousand."

Satyakama dwelt away a number of years, till the cows became one thousand.

Now, mark you, in all these years no instruction was given, no questions were answered. The boy had been initiated, and after that had been sent to the forest with cows to herd. But Satyakama was a thoughtful student. He did not waste his time idly, he meditated on the meaning of initiation, he put himself questions, and tried to solve them. What was the result? He trained his own mind to solve his problems. The answers seemed to come from outside, for all nature began to speak to him—the bull of the herd, the sacred fire, a swan, a diver-bird, from everywhere his questions were answered, but in reality it was his own awakened mind that spoke to him. Nature is always ready to reveal her secrets but we must know how to approach her. We are part of nature, and our mind a wave in the universal mind. From that universal mind all knowledge comes. Through meditation we place ourselves in rapport with the source

of all knowledge and wisdom. And when this is done light will come to us from everywhere, from trees and plants, from stars and sky, from the earth, from wood and stone.

This is what happened to Satyakama. Without teacher except his own mind, without books or scripture, without instruments he learned everything. And when he came back to the Ashrama, Gautama seeing him, exclaimed with great joy, "My friend, thou shinest like one who knows Brahman. Who has taught thee?"

Gautama at once realized that his student knew truth. He could tell him only what Satyakama already knew, what his own mind had taught the boy. Satyakama had discovered the perfection that was already in him.

And now in conclusion let me remind you that your time of learning is not over when you leave the university. We learn through the whole of our life. Here, you are taught *how* to learn; here, you get training, that afterwards you may be able to draw lessons from everything and everywhere.

When Svetaketu had finished his university career at the age of 24, he came home greatly conceited and arrogant, for he considered himself well-read. Then his father questioned him, "My son, did you get the highest instruction? Do you know the Atman, your true self?" "No, Sir," Svetaketu replied, "I do not know the Atman." Then he was sent back to study again. The highest knowledge he had not even thought of, still he was conceited considering himself well-read. But when he went back to his teacher he learned the highest truth, Tat twam asi.

When Saunaka who had already completed his Brahmacharya course and had become a householder found in his daily life many mysteries which he was not able to solve, he realized that something still was lacking in his education. So he approached the sage Angiras, and asked, "What is that, O Bhagavan, which being known, all things become known?" Then Angiras explained that there are two kinds of knowledge to be acquired namely Para-vidya and Apra-vidya, higher and lower knowledge. Apra-vidya is that which is taught in schools and universities. Para-vidya is that by which the Immortal is known. This is the highest knowledge, to know the Immortal, the Atman, the Soul

in man. Knowing Him, all things become known. No university course, no books, no microscope or telescope can reveal to us the Immortal. He is the source of all being, of all existence, all life, all wisdom. He dwells in every heart.

"As the spider creates and absorbs, as medicinal plants grow from the earth, as hairs grow from the living person, so this universe proceeds from the Immortal." And knowing the the Immortal One himself becomes immortal.

That is the true aim of life. Try to know the Atman, seek to know him, for to him who seeks, the Atman reveals its true nature. "He who knows him," the *Kathopanishad* says, "who has his mind always under control and who is pure, reaches the goal from which he is not born again." Then all the desires of the heart are satisfied, all doubts are solved, and man lives in perfect bliss.

My friends, in this period of your life you have a wonderful opportunity to train your body and mind, to shape your character, to prepare for manhood. But remember, there is a study that no university, that no educational institution can give. That is the study of your own mind. Watch your mind, keep it pure and controlled, make it obey your command. When the mind is controlled, the body must follow. Every individual in school or out of school has to train his own nature, has to build his own character. That is an individual study for which you get no diploma, but that, if successful, will place you on the highest summit of success.

Many of the great men of America never entered a university. But they were from boyhood diligent students in the school of life. They were industrious, truthful, persevering, enterprising. They were entirely devoted to the goal they had in view; they never rested till their goal was reached.

Aim at the highest, work for the highest, think of the highest, and realize the highest. And may it be given to many of you to make your mark in the world, to distinguish yourselves, to become a blessing to your country nay, to humanity. May you all become honest, truthful, industrious, spiritual men. Then the blessings of Gods and Rishis will rest upon you for ever. Your country needs you, the world needs you.

Don't forget that with *Apara-vidya* you must also study *Para-vidya*, that higher science that deals with the soul. Study your *Gita*, your *Upanishads*, the works of the Swami Vivekananda. Study and practise religion. Introduce religion into your lives, try to realize that you are *Atman*. If you realize the *Atman*, your life will be a real success. Then you will know that all strength, all powers, all knowledge is within you. And with that realization you will be able to accomplish everything, you will not only be real men, but supermen, qualified to become world-leaders.

You have the great advantage of living in the only country where science and religion are one. All religions except Vedanta, tremble at the approach of science. It is Vedanta alone that welcomes science, that encourages science; for there it is taught that Truth alone triumphs, not ignorance. The path to Truth leads through knowledge. That path the sages followed, that path leads to the highest goal.

May we hear with our ears what is right and good; may we see with our eyes what is holy and beautiful; may we keep our body and mind under control."

Om Shantih ! Shantih !! Shantih !!!

SWAMI SARADANANDA

By A Devotee

"Sarat—How hard he works, how silently and patiently he bears all troubles ! He is a Sadhu, what need has he personally to do all this ? Men of his type can, if they will, remain ever in uninterrupted thought of God. It is for your benefit that they are dwelling in the lower planes. Ever keep their character before your eyes and serve them with devotion."—Thus did the Holy Mother—the high-souled nun-wife of Sri Ramakrishna—observe in the course of her conversation with a devotee about the late Swami Saradananda—one of the greatest apostles of the Prophet of Dakshineswar—in whose passing away the Ramakrishna Mission has sustained an irreparable loss. Indeed the Swami placed before the modern world an ideal life combining the noblest spirit of renunciation and service, knowledge and devotion. And it was possible for him to work tirelessly for the good of others because he was first of all a man of rare spiritual attainments and powers.

Sarat Chandra Chakravarty, for that was the name by which the Swami was known before he renounced the world, was born in Calcutta of pious Brahmin parents in the year 1866 A. D. As a boy he studied along with his cousin, the late Swami Ramakrishnananda, in the Albert School, Calcutta. Both of them were members of a society started under the influence of Keshab Chandra Sen, and came to know of Sri Ramakrishna from some of their fellow members who had seen the Master in Keshab's Brahmo Samaj. It was on the anniversary of the association which was once celebrated at the temple of Dakshineswar that the cousins were blessed to see Sri Ramakrishna for the first time.

This meeting of the disciples with the Master proved to be a momentous one. Sri Ramakrishna who could peep into the past and future of the boys held before them the life of perfect chastity and renunciation which they later on embraced as instructed by the Master. He said—"One must smear the hand with oil before breaking open the jack fruit. The tender plant is to be hedged round, lest it be eaten up by goats. Bricks and tiles, if burnt with the trade marks on them retain the marks for ever. Similarly if you enter the world after attaining devotion to the Lord, after making some progress in the path of spirituality you will not sink in the mire of worldliness." "But now-a-days", the Master continued, "parents get their boys married while they are quite young, and pave the way to their spiritual ruin. Sometimes as soon as the boys finish their studies they find themselves fathers of children. They have to struggle hard to find a job for the maintenance of the family. Perhaps they find one with a low pay. But they are at a loss to feed many mouths with the small income. So naturally they have to keep themselves busy with the thoughts of earning money. How is it possible for them to think of God and religion?" "Then Sir," asked one of the boys "is it wrong to marry?" Sri Ramakrishna instead of giving any direct reply, asked him to take a book from the shelf and read certain passages from it. The boy read the words of Jesus Christ,—“For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb; there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men; and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the Kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.” The next passage was St. Paul's—"I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, it is good for them if they abide even as I. But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to

marry than to burn." To this Sri Ramakrishna added that marriage was at the root of all bondage. But one among the audience interrupted him saying—"Do you mean to say, Sir, that marriage is against the will of God? And how can creation go on if people cease to marry?" To this Sri Ramakrishna replied with a smile, "Don't you worry about that. Those who like to marry are at perfect liberty to do so. What I said just now was between ourselves." The cousins returned home, fascinated by the wonderful personality of the Master, determined to visit him henceforward and to learn from him the secrets of the spiritual life. About Sarat and Sasi Sri Ramakrishna used to say that both of them were disciples of Jesus Christ in a previous incarnation. The remarkable spirit of apostolic love and self-abnegation that actuated the disciples fully confirmed this assertion of the Master. This was probably the reason why Swami Saradananda lost all outward consciousness when he first saw the statue of St. Peter in Rome. A perfected soul that he was, he came to the world, moved by the misery of others and helped men and women to follow the way to peace and blessedness till the very last days of his life.

It was since the year 1882 when Sarat was studying in the St. Xavier's College, Calcutta, that he began to visit Sri Ramakrishna regularly. The Master who is said to have remarked at their very first meeting about the disciple's spirit of stern renunciation, was much pleased to note his great spiritual potentiality. One day he asked Sarat, "How do you like to realise God? What divine vision do you like to see in meditation?" "I do not want to see any particular form of God in meditation" replied the young disciple, "I want to see Him manifested in all creatures of the world. I do not care for visions." The Master remarked with a smile, "That is the last word about spiritual attainment. You cannot have it all at once." "But I won't be satisfied with anything short of that," replied Saratchandra, "I shall strive my best until I am able to attain to it." Indeed the mainspring of the universal love that filled the Swami's mighty heart later on was his realisation of the divinity in all, which he attained through superhuman spiritual strivings after the passing away of the Master.

Sarat whole-heartedly accepted Sri Ramakrishna as his spiritual guide. And it was at the feet of the Master that he met his great brother-monk Swami Vivekananda. He was struck with the purity and strength of his character, and came to love and

revere him only next to his Guru. During the days of his life as a student in the arts college and later on in the medical college he also came to know the other disciples of the Master, and soon their acquaintance ripened into an indissoluble bond of mutual love and regard which marked all the members of the spiritual brotherhood that came to be formed round the personality of Sri Ramakrishna. In 1885 the Master fell ill, and Sarat was one of the foremost of the disciples who served him night and day with remarkable steadfastness and devotion. After the passing away of Sri Ramakrishna in 1886, Sarat took the vow of life-long celibacy and poverty, and became one of the blessed monks who were instrumental in founding the first monastery of the Order of Sri Ramakrishna under the guidance of the greatest of their brother disciples, Swami Vivekananda. Here along with his fellow monks he passed his days in strenuous ascetic practices and religious disciplines, in deep study and lively discussions on comparative religion and philosophy, literature and history, arts and sciences. The primary goal of all these all-renouncing souls was to realise in their own lives the great spiritual ideal that was embodied in their Divine Master. An intense earning for Divine vision seized their soul. Their devotional songs, chantings of scriptures, repetition of the Lord's name, meditation, deep and silent,--all these used to make the whole atmosphere of the Math vibrant with spiritual consciousness. But not all the monks lived in the monastery all along. There came a time when Sarat like many of his brother monks left the Math and led the life of a Parivrajaka or of a wandering Sannyasin visiting many places of pilgrimage in the Himalayas and elsewhere, passing through extreme hardship and privation, but always assiduously engaged in the most austere spiritual culture.

During these years he visited Benares, Brindaban, Puri and other places in the plains. He also travelled in the Himalayas sometimes in the company of Swami Vivekananda and other fellow-disciples. With the brother monks he visited Almora, Karna Prayag Rudra Prayag and Srinagar. At the last place he along with them took up his residence in a lonely hut on the banks of the Alakananda and studied the Upanishads and other scriptures under Swami Vivekananda who saturated the minds of the monks with the meaning and message of the Eternal Religion of India. At Hrishikesh he also lived with the brethren for a considerable time in a hut built by their own hands, performing strenuous

spiritual practices and living on *madhukari Bhiksha*, literally begging a few morsels of food from each house, "even as the bee supports itself with particles of honey gathered from each flower." After passing years in travel and spiritual practice Swami Saradananda returned to the monastery near Calcutta.

The period of the Swami's Sadhana, which covered ten long years beginning with the demise of his Master, was now over, and henceforth began the years of his unremitting service and ministration, of sharing with others the rare fruits of his spiritual realisation and achievement. In 1896 the call came from Swami Vivekananda who wrote to him before his departure from America to join him in London. At the bidding of his chief, he at once sailed from Calcutta and reached London in April, 1896 before his brother-monks arrival there. The meeting of the two fellow disciples after several years was an event of great joy. Many were the happy reminiscences and exchanges of thoughts. Each learnt with great interest the news which the other had to deliver. Both the Swamis made their home in St. George's Road, London. Here Swami Vivekananda began his lectures and classes which attracted many of the best in English Society. Having initiated his brother monk into the work of a preacher by personal example and instruction, the Swami sent him to New York at the insistent request of friends and disciples. By his charming personality and his masterly exposition of Hinduism the new teacher drew a large number of sincere and spiritually-minded men and women "who were attracted to the Vedanta by the other Swami's eloquence and example but who had not sufficient opportunity for personal contact to become what one would call, *established* in it." Soon the Swami earned a great reputation for himself, and was invited to be one of the teachers in the Greenacre Conference of Comparative Religions held in July, 1896. There he delivered lectures on the Vedanta and held classes on the Yoga systems with great ability. After the session of the Conference was over the Swami visited Boston, Brooklyn, Cambridge and New York at the earnest invitation of friends, and delivered series of lectures to most appreciative audiences. Success was with him since the very beginning of his ministration in America. The *Boston Evening Transcript* in reporting his first lecture delivered in America wrote—"The Hindu teacher has the impassive fascination of his race, and although this was his first public lecture in the English tongue he made himself heard and understood with great clearness and

force. . . . After the lecture there was an interesting discussion in which the profound principles of the Vedanta Philosophy were brought out with still more telling force."

Towards the close of October 1896, the Swami gave a charming lecture at the Brooklyn Ethical Association on "The Ethical Ideas of the Hindus," which along with some of his other lectures and writings has been embodied in his "Stray Thoughts on the Literature and Religion of India." He also spoke at the Vedanta Society of New York, and from there returned to Cambridge, Mass. where he taught until the New Year. For two months he took charge of the class at the Vedanta Society of New York. But owing to the earnest calls from other places he could not stay there long. He next joined the Cambridge Conferences, and made a deep impression on all who listened to him by his lucid exposition, spirit of friendliness and toleration for other religions. After a short visit to New York in May, the Swami went to Greenacre to be present again at the next annual session of the Conference where he gave a series of interesting lectures on the literature and religion of India. He visited Boston again and spoke before the Free Religious Association on the "Sympathy of Religions." The month of October he spent in Montclair where he lectured three times a week to large numbers of cultured men and women of the city. The spheres of the Swami's usefulness were fast expanding. It was at this time that he was called back by his leader Swami Vivekananda to help him in his work in India, particularly in organising the chief monastery at Belur and training the monks there as preachers and teachers of Vedanta.

Swami Saradananda left New York for India on the 12th of January, 1898. His American friends and students felt very sorry to lose him from their midst. Dr. Lewis G. Janes, Director of the Cambridge Conference thus wrote to the Editor of the *Brahmavadin* in appreciation of the Swami and his work—"The many friends of the Swami Saradananda in Cambridge and vicinity cannot permit him to return to India without expressing through your column's their hearty appreciation of the excellent educational work which he accomplished in this country, and the fine accompaniment of personal character and influence which greatly strengthened the effect of the work wherever it was conducted. On every hand, the friends of the Swami express a sense of personal loss in his departure, and hope that he may some time return to America where his work is so heartily appreciated. In

Cambridge, the classes in the Vedanta philosophy, constituting a single feature in the broad field of comparative study outlined for the Cambridge Conferences, attracted large and intelligent audiences, in part made up of professors and students of the Harvard University. The Swami's exposition of the principles of the Advaita doctrine, in just comparison with other views which are held in India, was admirably lucid and clear. His replies to questions were always ready and satisfactory. His great fairness of mind and soundness of judgment enabled him to present the doctrine in a manner which at once convinced all of his sincerity and earnestness, while it disarmed the factious opposition which is sometimes stirred up by a more dogmatic and assertive manner. In Boston, Waltham and Worcester Mass., the Swami Saradananda also conducted courses of lectures which were largely attended and which everywhere manifested a sustained interest in his subject."

The Swami returned to India in the beginning of February, 1898. Since his arrival he set himself to the task of organising the Ramakrishna Math at Belur. But he did not limit his activities to the monastery alone. During the summer of 1899 he made a tour in the cities in Kathiawar, accompanied by Swami Turiyananda, and created a great interest in Vedanta and the Vedantic movement by his illuminating talks and lectures. In reporting one of his lectures a correspondent wrote to the *Brahmavadin*—"The Swami Saradananda's lecture on the 'Essence of the Vedas', made a deep impression upon all the people of Bhavnagar, Kathiawar. It was delivered in the lecture-hall of the Bhavnagar High School on 14th April 1899. . . His noble figure, his majestic voice, the fire and grandeur of his eloquence, gave him a power to inculcate into the minds of his audience the Vedanta doctrine far better than any other teacher of Vedantism I have known." In December of the same year he went to preach the message of his Master in Eastern Bengal, and delivered lectures and talks at Dacca and Barisal, and won new and enthusiastic adherents and admirers for the cause of Sri Ramakrishna. After his return from Dacca he lectured regularly at the Sunday meetings of the Ramakrishna Mission in Calcutta. But his main work lay for some time at the Belur Math which he organised in a masterly way. He held before the young Brahmacharins and Sanyasins the ideals of strict discipline and religious practice, and helped them to mould their lives and be trained for future work. With the

vision of a seer, Swami Vivekananda saw that his illustrious brother who possessed remarkable devotion and steadiness, sound judgment and tender heart and was at the same time acquainted with the Western method of organisation, was to play a great part in the life of the organisation he founded for fulfilling the mission of his Master. And that was the reason why he called him away from America all of a sudden, and placed on him the onerous duties of a Secretary which he fulfilled with unique ability and success till the very end of his earthly career.

For nearly three decades Swami Saradananda was the chief organiser of the Ramakrishna Mission in its manifold activities, missionary, educational and philanthropic. As the right hand man of Swami Brahmananda, the late President of the Mission, he directed and guided with infinite love and patience, tact and resourcefulness the infant organisation left to him by Swami Vivekananda, and developed it into a mighty organisation with its numerous monasteries, educational institutions and homes of service in India and abroad. But the Swami was not an organiser only. During the long period of his ministration he revealed himself in his manifold aspects. We have been privileged to see him as a mighty teacher who transformed the lives of innumerable souls by awakening the spiritual power latent in them. We have been blessed to see him further as the inspired author of "Sri Ramakrishna Lila prasanga"—the immortal life of his Master; of "Bharate Saiti Puja"—the admirable treatise on the worship of the Motherpower; of the "Stray Thoughts on the Literature and Religion of India"—a popular and scholarly work giving a true insight into Indian culture, ancient and modern; as the learned editor of the Bengali monthly, "The Udbodhan" which has been carrying the inspiring message of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda to the heart of Bengal; as a powerful speaker who inspired his audience by his charming eloquence; as a great scholar interpreting the scriptures with a wonderful lucidity that removed the doubts of the listeners; as a devotee of the Divine Mother, who looked upon all women as Her living embodiments; as a staunch supporter of the women's movement, whose fostering care has developed the small girls' school started by Sister Nivedita into a big institution with a spacious house of its own; as a wonderful social servant ever ready to lay down his life in the service of others; as an expert musician trained by Swami Vivekananda himself, who

enchanted the hearts of his hearers by his devotional songs; as an unfailling friend, a kind adviser, a loving guide, a tamer of men; as a saint of steady wisdom who in the memorable words of the *Bhagavadgita*, was "unshaken by adversity, unmoved by happiness, free from affliction, fear and wrath, and satisfied in the Self by the Self."

The last few years of the Swami's life were spent greatly in prayer and meditation. The thoughts of external activities lost all attraction for him. He saw before him the passing away of most of his brother-disciples and co-workers. With the demise of the Holy Mother and of Swami Brahmananda, the Swami began to feel that his life's task was over. Even the desire to write the concluding chapters of the Life of his Master left him altogether. On being asked about the matter he once said to a devotee, "I have lost all impetus for work. Now it seems to me that I have understood very little of Sri Ramakrishna. Writing or speaking about him appears to me as only moving on the surface. The only desire with me now is to lose myself completely in the meditation of his divine life and character." And lost himself he has through Mahasamadhi in uninterrupted communion with his Lord and Master. But he has left behind him the sweet memory of his divine life, and the choicest fruits of his spiritual realisations in his immortal works which will ever continue to inspire and enlighten the seekers after truth in the dark and dreary wilderness of the world. The entire Ramakrishna Mission stands to-day as the monument to his glory. May the mighty spiritual power that has broken down the shackles of the mortal frame, work with greater freedom and intensity in everwidening spheres and regions for the spiritual regeneration of India and the world!

NOTES AND COMMENTS

BARA-WAFAT,

In spite of the many communal riots that are taking place in many parts of India, it is quite refreshing to observe that the two great communities of India, the Mussalman and the Hindu, have joined hands in some places to celebrate the Bara-Wafat, the Prophet's Birthday, which happened to fall on the 9th of September this year.

Mahommed was born in Mecca in the year, 570 A.D. and not long after his birth he became an orphan. He was adopted by his uncle Abu Talib, a leader of the Quraish—one of the most powerful

and noble tribes of Arabia. The condition of Arabia was then very deplorable—gross licentiousness, idolatry, superstition, and barbarity being the order of the day. From the very beginning of his life Mahommed had a distaste and dislike for this state of the Society in which he was born and his serious mein and truthfulness soon brought him the appellation *Sadiq* and *Ameen*. Society could not please him; that made him naturally turn to Nature and there in communion with her he found solace and comfort. As he grew in years he began to feel more and more for his fellowmen and after forty long years of strenuous struggle and discipline came to him the Inner Call. He felt he had new a message to deliver to humanity and this made him the founder of a new religion. "Standing on a small hill, under the burning desert sun" he called upon the Meccans to follow the path of virtue, the path of God. And the people of Mecca heeded him not. But when he began to denounce their evil customs and manners they got enraged and actually threw dirt and refuse at him while some even went to the length of spitting in his face. Others tried to poison him. As is the characteristic of a prophet, patiently, meekly, and humbly he bore them all. Thus in the name of Allah he had to endure everything. "Islam" which he preached meant submission to the Divine Will and he continued preaching his doctrines submitting to all opposition and hardship. His enemies plotted to murder him. But he came out of it safe. Stones were pelted at him until he bled. But never did he shew annoyance, never did he curse his enemies. Only forgiveness issued forth from his hallowed lips. When torture and tyranny failed temptations of woman and gold were thrown in his way; he did not care for them nor did he prove less vehement in his condemnation of the sad state of his Society. Withstanding all tribulations and with a certainty and conviction he proclaimed, "Know ye, all men! There is no God but God, and I am His Messenger" By this he did not claim divinity for himself; nor did he make any special claim for his teaching. He said he came to teach Islam which was nothing new but only a repetition of what successive prophets tried to impart to the people in earlier periods of human history. Still, hostile and bitter was the reception accorded to his message with the result that finally he was driven out from Mecca with his friend and comrade Abu Bakr. But Medina gave him a hearty welcome and the people of that place listened to him. Soon Medina accepted Islam. It has been pointed out by a historian of

his life that poverty and suffering were his lot and yet he revelled and gloried in them. To-day he is the one bond that unites more than three hundred millions of human beings in the face of this earth—a bond that has affixed on the Muslim community its stamp of discipline and brotherhood the like of which one cannot see in any other religion of the world.

The Upanishads have rightly declared that Truth alone conquers and it is adherence to the truth that crowned the efforts of Mahommed with success. It is this truth which lies imbedded in Islam that makes it one of the living religions to-day. For why do the teachings of Krishna or Christ, Buddha or Mahommed appeal to the sense of humanity to-day as when they were delivered? The answer is simple. In spite of the filthy accretions of ages lie hidden in these religions nuggets of gold—priceless truths which the higher inborn sense of every human being is compelled to recognise and look upon with awe and reverence : otherwise these religions would not be living to-day.

Now the essence of the prophet's teaching was the Oneness of God and the Equality of man. It was not a mere Islamic brotherhood as some understand that Mahommed preached but it was a universal brotherhood. In fact it may be safely asserted that Democracy is the child of Islam. Mahommed could not have conceived it if he were a bigot. Islam has been maligned as a religion of the bigot—a religion which allows its followers to wage war against the infidels, nay, more, which considers the slaughter of the unbelievers as an act of mercy. There is no justification for this imputation; for the Qu-ran unmistakeably and un-equivocally states, "*There is no compulsion in religion.*" Surely he did not despise other religions or their prophets. Otherwise how could he proclaim, "All people are a single nation; So Allah raised us as bearers of good news and as warners." He wanted his followers to live with their co-religionists in peace and brought home to their minds that as God was Almighty He could have made all of them of one religion if he wished and thus impressed the Muslims the necessity of recognizing other faiths and other prophets. Says the Prophet, "Surely those who believe, and those who Judaize, and Christians and Sabians, whoever believeth in God and the last day, and doth that which is right, they shall have their reward with their Lord; there shall come no fear on them, neither shall they be grieved"—Qu-ran Ch. II. And according to Muslim divines the wars in which the Prophet took part were

only defensive wars for preserving society from plunging into chaos. And Mahommed wanted "the believers" to do likewise. In fact Mahommed condemned wars and fighting for the purposes of achieving political ends. Says a Mahomedan writer, "It prescribed the following three occasions when unsheathing the sword is declared a necessity: (1) to restore peace and order and defend life and property; the sword is to be sheathed if the enemy desists from fighting, (2) *to establish religious freedom, so that each and every person may be at liberty to exercise freely his individual judgment and have his own opinion in religious matters and* (3) *to protect the Houses of God irrespective of religion.*" (The italics are ours.) They shew how broad, an outlook the founder of Islam had and how his heart went forth to all irrespective of creed and clime. Hence it will not be far wrong if we conclude that the injunctions of Mahommed were misinterpreted by the hordes of barbarians and selfish and imperialistic rulers as sanctions to pillage and plunder or extend their territories for the sake of Islam.

It is fourteen centuries since Mahommed saw the light at Mecca and more than twelve centuries since his great religion found its way into this country. And ever since, India has, except at a few intervals, suffered from untold persecution at the hands of his followers. Mahommed - the "Praised One" - the Mahomedans of India have made an object of terror to the majority of the Hindu population up to the present day. The ordinary Hindu has judged the Prophet not from a study of the Qu-ran but by a living contact with his professed followers and in these followers of Mahommed he has observed more cruelty and more thirst for blood than in the followers of any other religion. He has further heard some Mussolmans declaring that the Qu-ran considers the killing of unbelievers as an act of mercy. In actual experience too he has found the votaries of Islam exhibiting an in-ordinate lust for power, woman and gold. His judgment based upon these and similar facts cannot but be deficient if not mistaken.

It is a happy sign of the times, however, that a few men of light and leading among Mahomedans have begun to lay stress upon the above cosmopolitan view of Mahommed and remove the bigotry which has been at the bottom of many a broil between Muslims and Hindus which to-day are disturbing the peace and happiness of both the communities. One Hindu speaker at the celebration of the prophet's Birthday in Madras said : "A cultural

understanding between these two religions and a critical but friendly study of each other's religion would solve many of the communal problems now prevailing in this country." Elsewhere a Mahommedan speaker addressed his Hindu-Muslim brothers on the fundamental unity discoverable at bottom of all religions and showed how Hinduism and Islam had many things in common. Said he: "The Suffis and the Hindu Vedantins are one. With the pure Vedic religion of old no Mahommedan can possibly find fault with." No less a person than Sri Ramakrishna who, instructed by a Moulvi, practised the Mahommedan Sadhanas, has after personal realisation declared in our own times that the Lord would reveal Himself to any one if he but care to follow sincerely the path laid down by his own religion. It was the Swami Vivekananda who declared once that a true Hindu is he who is at the same time a true Christian and a true Mussalman. He opined that "without the help of practical Islam, theories of Vedantism, however fine and wonderful they may be, are entirely valueless to the vast mass of mankind." "We want to lead mankind where there is neither the Vedas nor the Bible nor the Qu-ran: yet this has to be done by harmonising the Vedas the Bible and the Qu-ran. Mankind is to be taught that religions are but varied expression of the Religion which is Oneness, so that each may choose the path that suits him best.

'For our own motherland a junction to the great systems, Hinduism and Islam—Vedanta brain and Islam body—is the only hope. I see in my mind's eye the future perfect India rising out of this chaos and strife, glorious and invincible, with Vedanta brain and Islam body." So said Swami Vivekananda, the patriot saint of India. May we hope that the celebrations of the Prophet's Birthday by Hindus and Mussalmans together will be the beginning of a new era of concord—peace and good-will amongst mankind at large and Hindus and Mussalmans of India in particular.

THE VIA MEDIA OF INSTRUCTION.

In the last session of the Imperial Education Conference held in London the question as to whether vernaculars or English should be the medium of instruction in the British Empire was discussed. Dr. M. P. West the Principal of the Training College Dacca is reported to have pleaded for English on the ground that "Vernacular was the language of poetry and religion." and that "if the student was deficient in English he had no chance of access to the world's literature or information." Such a remark, we are

afraid, is like putting the cart before the horse and therefore, forced and unnatural. Instruction through the medium of a foreign language not only hinders the natural growth of a student's mind but causes a great strain on his very vitality, while instruction through the mother tongue is most scientific, involves less expenditure of energy and facilitates the growth and assimilation of knowledge. Let us examine at some length the suitability of vernacular as the medium of instruction.

In the first place, the student thinks and talks in his mother-tongue and it will be admitted by all that the subtle and true import of any subject he learns can find a ready and easy entrance into his mind best if instruction is imparted through his own language. On the other hand a foreign language could only cramp his powers of understanding and create confusion in his mind. Unable to get at a clear conception of the subject taught the student takes to cramming with the result that he does not digest what he learns but even in his attempt at cramming he loses his capacity for original and independent thinking. With this loss of mental energy his body too suffers; so intimate is the connection between the body and the mind.

In the second place, if the medium of instruction be vernacular it economises time in as much as the student could right up plunge into his subject instead of wasting his years on the study of a foreign language before he understands the subject he wishes to pursue.

In the third place, it helps the formation of the student's character by bringing him into closer touch with the ideals of his nation and culture. The vernacular gives him greater opportunities of getting acquainted with the lives of great men that lived and thought in his own land and imbibing their spirit. It cannot be gainsaid that the literature of a nation is the depository of its genius. Therefore it is indispensable that he should be in close touch with his own literature and imbibe his own culture. Every one knows how difficult it is to translate the spirit of one language into that of another and it will be admitted by all that an attempt to impart any country's culture through a foreign language cannot but end in failure. The young student brought up in a foreign culture and in a foreign language, as at present is the case, can only make him a stranger in his own land. Sad to say that is what has happened in our own country.

The introduction of English, as a medium of instruction for over a century has done great harm to India : it has done more disservice than good to the people of this land : it has hypnotised them and made them forget their own cultural greatness. However it is a hopeful sign of the times that we have begun to discover our fault and are now trying to rectify them. We should not be understood to insinuate that the English language has done no good at all, for nothing in this world can be absolutely good or absolutely bad. The rude shock which Indian culture has received and the denationalising influence that has come as a result far outweigh the good that has accrued from the introduction and spread of the liberalizing influence of English literature. Mr. West is overzealous when he speaks that a citizen of the British Empire should have "an access to the world's literature or information". But may we ask him whether a man should first learn to be a son of his own nation or of the world. Putting first things first we have no doubt that most people will agree with us when we say that man must fit himself to be citizen of his own state and hence vernacular will stand first and foremost for the growth and welfare of this country. Mr. West and persons of his stamp perhaps in their zeal for their national literature cannot see eye to eye with us and know and feel what great loss we have sustained by the following of this policy in India. It was actuated by this conviction that the veteran educationist of Bengal, Sir Ashutosh Mukherjee in one of his convocation addresses observed that instruction through the medium of Vernaculars is most natural and "fraught with possibilities which the best heads cannot foresee."

Until the present educational system is thoroughly overhauled and recast on national ideals, education in India will never turn out to be the panacea, as it ought to be, for all the evils which India now suffers from.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

Nachiketa (In Bengali)—By Swami Sambuddhananda—Published by Brahmachari Sarada Chaitanya, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Sonargaon, Dacca. Pp. 50, Price As. 6.

All Students of Sanskrit are familiar with the name of Nachiketa. The author in this little Bengali brochure before us has attempted to dramatise that Vedic parable of the Kathopanishad. Nachiketa seeks the path to Yama's world. First the lad meets

a peasant—who could not point him out the way. Nor could the scholar whom he sees next help him in his great quest. But then he comes across a spiritual Sadhaka who enlightens him. Now Nachiketa enters Yama's presence and the Upanishadic dialogue is made less tedious by interspersing scenes in which the three other characters and Yama play their part. As a piece of histrionic art the play may have its defects; but in presenting the great and ancient truths in an attractive form to the youngsters of schools and colleges the author may be considered to have succeeded.

The Mediator. By C. Jinarajadasa. Published by the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras. Pp. 95.

The booklet before us contains twelve short essays from the pen of Mr. Jinarajadasa, the Vice-President of the Theosophical Society. It begins with an essay on the 'Mediator' and hence the title of the booklet. Who is this Mediator? He is the man who can stand between man and God and 'through whom the life streams descend and ascend to and from all men'—such as a Buddha or Christ. Every man can aspire to this place if he is prepared to take pains to attain to it. The booklet ends with an interesting essay on the 'Joy of the Return.' The essayist has maintained the spirit of Theosophy through and through.

The Holy Life of our Lord and Saviour Bhagawan Shri Krishna. by S. N. K. Bijurkar, B.A. —Published by the author at Coondapoor, South Kanara. Parts I, II & III. Price annas 12 each.

We have received three parts of the book and find that they furnish an interesting reading. The salient points of Sri Krishna's life have been lucidly brought out and the book is bound to be useful especially to those who have not had the pleasure of reading the life in any of the vernaculars of India.

NEWS AND REPORTS

SWAMI NIRMALANANDAJI AT TAMLUK

In response to an invitation from Tamluk, Srimat Swami Nirmalanandaji, President Sri Ramakrishna Ashram, Bangalore, visited Tamluk on the 2nd September and was given a cordial reception by the people who mustered strong at the landing ghat and took him to the local Ramakrishna Sevashram with music and procession. Besides conducting the evening and morning classes held at the Ashram the Swamiji addressed a meeting of the ladies

on the 3rd September. In a short speech the Swamiji elucidated the doubts and difficulties raised by the ladies present. A public meeting on the 4th September was also held at the local High School Hall where an address was presented to him and the Swamiji delivered a neat and appealing speech on the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna. In concluding it he said that it did not matter whether the people bowed down before Sri Ramakrishna as a person, or not. What was most needed was to follow the principles he inculcated and that and that alone would bring in its train, economic, moral, social and spiritual advancement of the people. The Swamiji left Tamluk for Belur on the 5th September.

LECTURES BY SWAMI RAGHAVANANDA

In the course of his short stay in Madras, Swami Raghavananda delivered three lectures, two at the Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore and another at the Presidency College under the auspices of the Sanskrit Association of that college. The subjects for his discourses were, "The Science of Yoga," "Human Affection and Divine Love" and "Vedanta in the West." The Swami left for Ooty on the 7th of September.

SWAMI YATISWARANANDA AT OOTACAMUND.

The first of Swami Yatiswarananda's lectures came off on the 10th August on the occasion of the gift of the Panchakshara Hall to the Ramakrishna Mission. The Swami began by giving a brief sketch of the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda which were fraught with such tremendous consequences for the future of India and the world. He showed how religion was a living reality with these great souls and not a matter of book learning or talk. Their life and teachings stemmed the tide of materialism, scepticism, and denationalization. India and the world needed spiritual strength, and the way is to deepen their ideals of renunciation and service. Service, service of man as the manifestation of God,—not mere charity or philanthropy must be the watch-word.

In the second lecture delivered on Sunday the 14th August at the Ramakrishna Ashrama the Swami spoke on the "Ideal of Life." The Swami said that all men are seeking happiness and bliss consciously or unconsciously. He then compared the various ideals of happiness held by various sects in the world,—the materialists, the stoics, Purvamimamsakas, the Jains, the Buddhists, and the Vedantins and showed how the ideal of Infinite Bliss is realised by realising God Who is Bliss Infinite Itself.

The third discourse was on the "Message of Sri Krishna," on the occasion of Sri Krishna Jayanti celebration in the Panchakshara Hall on the 21st. The Swami first spoke on the necessity of the Krishna incarnation and dealt with the various aspects of the Lord's life and personality. It was followed by a brief explanation of the significance of the Gopilila, the most misunderstood of the chapters of Sri Krishna's life. No sensuous and impure man or woman can understand the meaning of divine love. It needed a Sukadeva of unbroken chastity, purity, and renunciation of worldliness and sensuality to understand the meaning of that divine love. It is not for others to dabble in that kind of life or in its criticism. Till we become *adhikaris* for it, let us worship Sri Krishna in other respects. Especially in this age there is great need of the thundering voice of strength and manliness uttered by the Lord in the battlefield of Kurukshetra. Here the Swami came to the subject proper and gave the outstanding messages of the Gita for this age—the harmony of various religions and of various paths, the synthesis of all philosophies which existed up to the time, the broad meaning given to Yajna which at present should be the service of the suffering millions of India.

The fourth discourse was on Varnashrama Dharma on the 24th in Panchakshara Hall. The Hindu community, he said, is at present an amalgamation of various races and tribes and Hinduism is the synthesis of the cultures of these various communities. There is no caste in religion, it is only a social order. The ideal man is the *Ati-arnashrami* who has gone beyond all *Dharmas* by fulfilling the *Dharmas*. And it is this idea of *Dharma* that is important in the scheme of Aryan life, and all rules and regulations of life were laid down to teach this. The present day caste denominations have ceased to carry any meaning. It was *Guna* and *Karma* that determined caste and therefore every one can rise to the highest Brahmanhood. But the unit of society in India being a community or caste, an individual can rise only with his own community and this rise comes by the appropriation of the culture of the higher castes. It is the difference in the realisation of the spiritual, ethical, and social ideals that determined the superiority or inferiority of a caste, not profession or names. The ideal was to raise all to the highest ladder from the Pariah to the Brahman. No privilege was contemplated, levelling up, not levelling down was the way to the equalization of castes. Each individual and each

caste by fulfilling the *Dharma* for which it has made itself fit will rise to the highest goal of life where there is no Varna or Dharma, *viz.* Mukti or Self-realisation.

On Sunday, the 28th, the Swami spoke in the Panchakshara Hall on the paths to realisation. It was an auspicious day dedicated to Vinayaka, the god of wisdom and the writer of divine knowledge. Realisation, not intellectual assent or appreciation was the goal of religion. Therefore it meant life, practice, struggle. Spiritual Sadhana is necessary for all irrespective of status, professions or duties of life. There are various paths to realisation. But each must stick to his own path. All the different paths by which sages of all religions have realised God can be brought under four broad scientific classifications *viz.* Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Raja Yoga, and Jnana Yoga. The different Yogas were then shown to be interrelated. The perfect type combined harmoniously all these three in which all the faculties of willing, knowing, and feeling were co-ordinated.

The last discourse came off on the 1st September on "Sri Ramakrishna and the Practice of Religion". The central theme of Sri Ramakrishna's life was realisation. Spiritual life can be had only by coming in close contact with spiritual life. Hence the necessity of a living *guru*. Sri Ramakrishna was the disciple of many *gurus* before he became a world teacher. He was an ideal *sadhaka* for this age of book-learning, scepticism, egoism, *Kamini* and *Kanchana*. And he has shown various paths to God-realisation. Acquisition of supernatural powers, breathing exercises, and grotesque postures have nothing to do with religion and spirituality. The goal is the manifestation of divinity within and to see God in all. The Swami then gave a brief description of the various *Sadhunas* of Sri Ramakrishna and pointed out that the significance of his marriage was that all including householders can lead a life of Brahmacharya without which no realisation was possible. Sri Ramakrishna's harmony of religions was not a loose combination of the best of all religions. It was a synthesis. The least difficult path for this Yuga for the majority of mankind is, according to Sri Ramakrishna Bhakti on which he used to lay great emphasis.

The Swami left Ooty for Madras on Wednesday the 14th September. On his way he halted at Tirupur for a few days. During his short stay there he delivered two lectures, one on "The Ideals of the Ramakrishna Mission" and the other on "The

Essentials of Hinduism." The Swami arrived at Madras on the 19th September after an absence of one and a half months.

RAMAKRISHNA STUDENT'S HOME, PATNA

The Ramakrishna Ashram has been shifted to a more commodious house on the Govinda Mitter Road and under its auspices a Student's Home has been started with a view to supplement the present university education by the harmonious development of head, heart and hand of the boys. Only nine students have been admitted. Three have been granted free boardships, considering their merit and straitened circumstances. The Home will admit 12 college students in all.

AN APPEAL.

ORISSA AND GUZERAT

The public is hereby informed that the Ramakrishna Mission has started relief works in the flooded areas of the District of Balasore. It is well known that the people of Orissa are generally poverty-stricken and the havoc caused by the floods have highly aggravated the situation. To ameliorate the sufferings of these poor people several parties have opened relief centres but sufficient men and money are necessary to cope with the present critical situation.

The Mission has also undertaken relief work in Cambay, Guzerat and have opened centres at Sayema and Tarapore in Kaira District where 75 villages are being relieved from these centres. Shops have been opened to supply at a cheap rate rice and seeds to persons who are unwilling to accept gratuitous relief from religious and social considerations.

We appeal, on behalf of the suffering humanity to the generous public for help. Any contribution in cash or kind, however small, will be thankfully received and acknowledged by,

(1) The President, Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math, Dist : Howrah.

(2) The Manager, Udbodhan Office, 1, Mukherjee Lane, Bagh Bazar, Calcutta.

(3) The Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Ashram, Khar, Bombay.

(Sd.) SUDDHANANDA,

Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math,

District Howrah,

The 14th September, 1927.

THE VEDANTA KESARI

"Let the lion of Vedanta roar."
"Let me tell you, strength is what we want
And the first step in getting strength is to uphold
The Upanishads and believe that 'I am the Atman.'"

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

VOLUME XIV]

NOVEMBER 1927

[NUMBER 7

PRAYER

ॐ

त्वमाविंदवः पुरुषः पुराण-
स्त्वमस्य विश्वस्य वरं निधानम् ॥
वेत्तऽसि वेद्यं च परं च धाम
त्वया तत्तं विश्वमनन्तरूप ॥
नमः पुरस्तादथ पृष्ठतस्ते
नमोऽस्तुते सर्वत एव सर्व ॥
अनन्तवार्धामितविक्रमस्त्वं
सर्वं समाप्नोषि ततोऽसि सर्वः ॥

Thou art the primal Deva, the ancient Purusha ;
Thou art the supreme Refuge of this universe, Thou
art the knower, and the One Thing to be known ;
Thou art the supreme Goal. By Thee is the universe
pervaded, O boundless Form.

Salutation to Thee before and to Thee behind,
salutation to Thee on every side, O All ! Thou, infinite
in power and infinite in prowess, pervadest all ; where-
fore Thou art All.

SPIRITUAL TALKS OF SWAMI BRAHMANANDA

Bhadrak, Balasore.

Dear A,—

I am glad to learn from your letter that by the grace of the Lord, you have a desire to spend some time in Sadhana (spiritual practices) and have secured a convenient place too. Everything has come out alright. And you are yet young. Make the best use of this opportunity. Don't spend away your valuable time in vain. Instead of bothering your head with big metaphysical problems, apply yourself steadily to Sadhana and you will realise the truth. Have faith and go ahead. You will not achieve anything without steady practice. Even if you spend your whole life in a mere study of philosophical questions, you will not be able to derive any benefit. Now that all things are favourable, settle down quietly to Sadhana at least for a year. Your body and mind will become pure and you will realise many things through God's grace. My advice is : give your mind wholly to Him without any other thought. Engage yourself always in Dhyanam (meditation), Japam, (repeating the holy name) and Smaran-Manan (constant remembrance and contemplation). Don't indulge in idle talks and advice gratis to others. You have strength in body, and the mind is not yet burdened with unholy impressions. Now is the time to do spiritual practices. It is easier to give the mind a good shape when it is still pure and plastic. And you have such a mind. Therefore plunge yourself deeply in Sadhana and pray to God with a yearning heart and He will solve all your doubts and difficulties. If you miss this opportunity, it will be extremely difficult for you to do anything afterwards. For gossiping and giving advice gratis you will always find time ; but for Sadhana you will never get a better opportunity than at present.

As far as possible I am giving you suitable answers to all your questions below. If you can follow them for some time at least, you will surely be blessed and many of your life's problems will be solved of themselves.

Q. How many hours in the day should we spend in Japam and meditation and how many again, in Pujās, (worship) and the study of scriptures?

A. The more time you can spend in all these, the better for you. Those who lead a life purely of meditation should spend at least sixteen hours in Japam and Dhyanam. As you continue your practice, you will be able to prolong this period. The more the mind is turned inward, the greater will be the joy. Once you get a taste of it, the desire for it will ever be increasing. Then your mind itself will tell you how long you are to devote in the practice of Sadhana. Before this stage is reached it is desirable that you should try at least two-thirds of the time in the day in Japam and Dhyanam. The rest of the time should be spent in reading sacred books and examining the various thoughts appearing in the mind at the time of your daily meditation. You should further see that the good thoughts are differentiated from the evil ones. And then gradually the antagonistic ideas are to be eliminated and replaced one by one by holy thoughts, and these again, cultured with great care and seriousness. In this way when all the disturbing elements of the mind are controlled and well-regulated, then and then alone can you attain to that state which is known as the state of real meditation. Instead of this, simply closing the eyes and counting the beads or thinking loosely on God will not bring you the desired object, God-realisation. Intense and serious thinking on God is what is most required

of those who hanker after eternal peace and happiness. The object of meditation is to make the mind calm and serene. And if you do not succeed in this or get any joy you are to understand that your meditation is not directed in the proper channel. One other point also I should like to impress on your mind. And that is this: whoever is supplying you with food and other necessities is entitled to a share of your merit, and therefore acquire so much merit as would leave you a decent balance after meeting this charge.

Q. What should I do when at times the mind becomes unwilling to meditate ; should I then study sacred books or try to engage the mind perforce in meditation ?

A. In the preliminary stages of Sadhana you must force your mind to meditate in order to cultivate a strong habit. The very nature of the mind is to shirk work, always seeking for ease and comfort. But if you really hanker after peace eternal, you are to labour hard. If you feel uncomfortable to sit for a long period at a stretch, then lie down on your bed and begin to perform your Japam ; and again if you are sleepy, do it walking about. Anyhow you are to keep the mind always engaged in the thought of God. On the other hand, if you let loose your mind you will never be able to cultivate a firm habit without which spiritual progress is utterly impossible. Continue therefore a regular fight with the mind and give it a firm shape. This is Sadhana ; and verily the end of all Sadhanas is to bring the mind under control.

Q. Are the processes of Hata-yoga, Pranayam (control of breath), Asana (regulation of sitting postures),

etc., more or less necessary for my spiritual practices? If so, to what extent, and how much time to be devoted to these ?

A. For the present no such practices are necessary for you. What is most essential is to meditate on God and God alone and pray to him incessantly with a devout heart. The thing is to be in constant touch with Him. Therefore try to follow it and He will get done by you everything required for you.

As regards the practice of Hata-yoga, you must perfectly keep yourself aloof from it or you will feel the consequence. It is a most dangerous path without the help of a competent guide. So, if you have a very strong desire for it, you can do it only when you may happen to live with any of Sri Ramakrishna's disciples and that must be strictly under his direction and guidance.

Q. How long should a Sadhaka sleep? Beyond his usual period of sleep can he spend a little more time to give his body and mind rest ?

A. Ordinarily four hours' sleep is quite sufficient for a Sadhaka in good health ; and sleep for more than five hours is not a rest but a kind of disease. It does great harm to him. By no means, a spiritual aspirant should sleep away the time in vain. And as youth is the most favourable time for Sadhana—when both the body and the mind remain strong—a Sadhaka must turn it into good account ; and during this time he must store up such an amount of spiritual energy that will safely lead him thereafter through the most unsafe-path of life to peace and happiness. Therefore if you cannot make good progress along the path of spiritual life now, it will be hardly possible for you to do anything afterwards. You are yet

young, my boy. Give a good shape to your mind. Plunge yourself heart and soul in Sadhana and make the best use of your time. You will get enough time for sleep and gossip later on

If anybody is asked to labour hard in Sadhana he will at once produce a number of lame excuses. He will say that the body is very weak and that sufficient rest is necessary. All this is insincerity. But he should know that the sense organs of those who are methodical in their spiritual practices and who lead a strictly regular life, become so-adjusted that four hours' rest is quite enough to keep the body healthy and in tune. By leading an irregular life, people generally tax their body and mind so heavily that even a period of eight or ten hours' sleep is too short to refresh their system. Therefore what I ask you, my boy, is this—regulate your life by all means and then your body and mind will be ever fresh and active. No more waste of time. Do something if you really hanker after things divine. Tall talk and lofty metaphysical speculations will bring you no good unless they are translated into action.

EDITORIAL NOTES

Criticism of Sannyasa

The institution of Sannyasa has become the object of much disfavour and criticism. The so-called Varnashramite, who is usually anxious to enjoy the privileges of caste without caring to fulfil the duties imposed on him, seems to have a positive dislike for the life of renunciation—the fourth and the final stage according to the ancient socio-religious system known as the Varnashrama Dharma. And against the very first principles of the religion which he professes to follow, he throws the burden of the family life on youngsters before they can finish their students' career and himself wants to cling to the world with an inordinate

passion until he is snatched away much against his will by death. If the attitude of the so-called orthodox is one of indifference and dislike, that of the so-called heterodox is positively hostile. The "modernist" to most of whom this world is all that exists and who wants to wring the "orange of the world dry", expresses a great hatred for what he calls the other worldly ascetic life. Further, the "reformed Hindu" who seems to have got a special knowledge of the central plan of the Creator and is anxious to realise life "in all its fullness and in all its varied experience" through romance and marriage, looks upon the life of celibacy as unnatural if not also inhuman. There is again the "altruist" who is too solicitous about the future welfare of the world, and wants to abolish the institution of monasticism altogether, lest it might stop the propagation of the human species and bring the world to its doom. The world is full of wiseacres who think in the light of the experience of their own life that it is not possible for others also to live a life of complete sex-control, and hence Sannyasa is nothing but a life of hypocrisy and immorality. Others again are pleased to hold that the monk is a social parasite, nay an anti-social being, and as such he should be forced to lead a married life and earn a livelihood for himself and his family.

Antiquity of Sannyasa

The monastic life is not an unmixed evil as is supposed by the critics. It is an undeniable fact that weak and wicked people putting on the garb of renunciation have disgraced monastic life. But that is not the fault of the ideal we find embodied in the lives of monks of the right type,—many of them world-moving figures,—who have brought infinite blessings to mankind. These noble souls have ever held before the world the noblest ideals of human existence and have worked for its spiritual regeneration through their inspired teachings and the living examples of their own lives of superhuman purity and divine realisation, renunciation and service. Monasticism has a mission to fulfil, and it has come into being for supplying a real demand of a class of people who look upon the world as vanity of vanities, and yearn for the realisation of the Reality of realities, which alone can bring the greatest peace and blessedness to man. Hinduism, Buddhism and Christianity have had their orders of monks ever since their inception. Even Islam with its bias for the family life had to make room for the institution of monks who have kept up the ideals of spiritual discipline and Divine communion before the followers of the Prophet of Arabia. In India the order of the Parivrajakas or

wandering monks has been as old as the Vedas themselves whatever be their ages. According to the Hindu tradition there came into existence at the very beginning of the world cycle both the Prajapatis or fathers of the human race and the Kumaras or "the celibates" who, "endowed with dispassion, inspired with holy wisdom, estranged from the universe and undesirous of progeny" preferred to adopt the life of renunciation and continence. The former became the promulgators of the Pravritti Dharma or "the religion of work" and the latter of the Nivritti Dharma or "the religion of renunciation", characterised by knowledge and indifference to worldly enjoyments and achievements. In course of time there arose a conflict between the followers of the two schools, as is clearly manifest in the Upanishads. The former who were adherents of the Karma Kanda scrupulously observed the various rituals and ceremonials of the Vedas and offered oblations to the gods for the fulfilment of their desires. They wanted to establish themselves in the world through their progeny, and attain after death to heavenly bliss through their sacrifices and knowledge of the gods. While the others who followed the Jñāna Kanda revelled against what they called meaningless forms and ceremonies, and wanted to realise only the glory and bliss of the all pervading Atman. They declared—"What shall we do with progeny since the Atman is the only abode we seek?" And of them the Upanishad says—"Having risen above the desires for sons, wealth and new worlds they wander above as mendicants. Being well established in the knowledge of the Vedānta, having purified their nature through the practice of Sannyasa or renunciation, the anchorites, enjoying the highest Immortality, attain their absolute emancipation after death."

The Goal of Life

The mighty current of existence is flowing impetuously and relentlessly with its everchanging experiences of pain and pleasure, life and death. To the thoughtful man the bright moments of pleasure seem to be very short compared to the long and dreary nights of misery through which he has to pass. And he naturally becomes weary of life and hankers after spiritual freedom. This is the highest goal according to all schools of Hindu thought. It has been given various names—*Nireyasa* (summum bonum) *Apavarya* (deliverance), *Kaivalya* (aloneness) *Mukti* (freedom) or *Moksha* (emancipation.) In spite of the differences in terms and even in conceptions, it means the soul's attaining to its true and pure nature which according to the teachers of the Vedānta is no

other than infinite Life, Knowledge and Bliss. But as it is given to very few to follow the direct path to Moksha, men and women have to gain the experiences of life and get dispassion for it through a controlled enjoyment of Artha, of the good things of the world, and satisfaction of Kama or legitimate desires. But this is to be done by following the path of Dharma, a righteousness, which implies strict physical and mental control and ethical and spiritual culture enjoined in varying degrees on all the members of society.

The Four Stages

The highest goal is to be realised by passing through the different stages of life one after another. The first stage is that of Brahmacharya—the period of sense-control, mental discipline and study. A Brahmacharin, if he wants and finds himself fit for it, may take the vow of life-long celibacy without entering the family life at all. But usually the youth, after he finds himself properly equipped for the struggles of life with its manifold attractions and temptations, should enter the stage of the householder. According to the Hindu ideal, marriage is a sacrament, and the household is an Ashrama, a place not for sense gratification but for the performance of duties, worship and service. The highest ideal of marriage, as declared by the sage Yajnavalkya is spiritual—"Verily, a husband is not dear, that you may love the husband; but that you may love the Self, therefore a husband is dear. Verily, a wife is not dear, that you may love the wife; but that you may love the Self, therefore a wife is dear." In the third stage the householder should leave his home and retire into the solitude of the forest accompanied by his wife if she shares his spiritual ideals. "Let him," says Manu, "constantly devote himself to studying and teaching, retain a calm mind, be a friend to all, conquer his passion, bestow upon others such gifts as knowledge, and be kind to all living beings. Let him not receive gifts from others. Thus should he conduct himself." All these stages are but preparations for the last—the life of Sannyasa.

The Ideal of the Sannyasin

The Sannyasin, in the words of Swami Vivekananda—the Prince of Sannyasins—"makes complete renunciation of all worldly position, property and name, and wanders forth into the world to live a life of self-sacrifice, and to persistently seek spiritual knowledge, striving to excel in love and compassion, and to acquire lasting-insight." His object is to go beyond all limitations of family and community, caste and creed and realise the One

in all, Perfect freedom is the ideal he wants to attain. Says Manu— "With his soul composed and centred on the Supreme Spirit, let him go about harming no living soul. By abstinence from malice towards all sentient creatures, and renunciation of all sensual enjoyments, by doing righteous deeds ordained by the scriptures, he attains final beatitude in this very world." In spite of the high place accorded by the ancients to Sannyasa there seems to be a definite attempt among a class of Hindus to decry it and preach in its stead the impossible creed of harmonising Bhoga or enjoyment and Tyaga or renunciation. To justify their own life and that of the community to which they belong, they want to drag the ideal down to their own level instead of themselves trying to rise to its height and frankly acknowledging their weakness when they fail in the attempt. The apotheosis of sense life at the cost of the higher spiritual life is doing incalculable harm to the cause of man's true well-being. People are losing the spiritual sense and are becoming incapable of appreciating the ideal of perfect control and renunciation. Protesting strongly against the present tendency does the learned author of "Pessimism and Life's Ideal" remark:—"The end of moral life is Sannyasa or absolute renunciation and that is why Sannyasa is the highest ideal of man. . . . Let us take care that we never lower the ideal and let us see that we never become such consummate hypocrites as to deny the ideal itself, because it is hard or because we do not find it in the lives of the founders of certain sects to which we may happen to belong. . . . That the ideal is hard was very well-known to the Rishis of India, but they never denied or belittled the ideal. On the contrary, their emphasis was here, for they knew very well that no emphasis is necessary where natural tendency is strong, that emphasis should lie the other way about."

From Brahmacharya to Sannyasa

According to the ancient Hindu scheme of Dharma the average man should try to reach the highest ideal by following the graduated stages of life. But should everyone be made to pass through the "mill of Grihasthashrama?" Should everyone be made to live *maritalement* on the plea of being given an "all-round" experience of life? The authors of the Hindu social system, while they enjoined the usual course of Ashrama life for the ordinary man, have also made special provision for extraordinary persons born with a real dispassion for material enjoyment and a true yearning for the realisation of the highest spiritual Truth. As the Upanishad says—

"Let a man embrace the Prarivrajaka life the moment he is freed from worldly desires no matter whether he be a Brahmacharin, Grihastha or Vanaprastha." Great discrimination should certainly be exercised in taking this bold step. One who is unfit for entering the life should be prevented from doing so by all means. But to bar the way to Sannyasa even in the case of him who has properly qualified himself for it is against the spirit of the Hindu religion. There have been backsliders among Sannyasins as among householders. But this is not due to the defect of the ideal. Let him who can, be given the fullest scope to follow it. "There is no specific time," says Swami Vivekananda, "prescribed for a life of Sannyasa. The Sruti says—Directly the spirit of renunciation comes you should take up Sannyasa." Swami Dayananda Saraswati—the founder of the Arya Samaj—also holds the same view. "Let him not, who cannot control his passions, enter into Sannyasa from Brahmacharya. But should not he who can restrain them? As the healthy can dispense with doctors and drugs, so should a man or woman, whose one object in life is to disseminate knowledge, advance true religion and do good to the world at large dispense with marriage-life like Panchashikha and Gargi of yore."

Sannyasa—No Menace to the World

Is Sannyasa impossible and unnatural? Is the Sannyasin really a social parasite who leads a selfish and anti-social life that threatens to bring about the extinction of the human race? The answer is that the life of control that the worldly minded finds impossible to lead is quite possible for him who as Manu says "restrains his senses, renounces attachment and hatred, bears no malice to any living creatures and works for immortality." To the pleasure-seeker nothing of life is left if sense-enjoyment is taken away. But to the true Sannyasin, renunciation opens up the world of Spirit, and brings an infinite joy and peace that others seek in the world of matter but cannot find. The person who embraces the life of Sannyasa in order to satisfy the hankerings of his higher nature finds it as natural as does the worldly man his life in the senses. Besides, if from the highest stand-point the world with all its charms and attractions is unreal and God is the only reality, then the maintenance of the human society cannot be an end in itself. Complete renunciation of the world and uninterrupted vision of the Divine alone must be regarded as the highest aspiration of man. What a blessing it will be if the entire human race would meet its mortal death and through it see its spiritual birthday.

But it will never come to pass, and so the fear of the extinction of mankind has not the least chance of proving true. Besides, so long as man remains a social animal, and there are people who in the name of following in the footsteps of King Janaka would give free license to their passions and continue to propagate the species, the world will go as merrily along its course as it has been doing in spite of the call of the greatest monastic teachers of the world, who seems to have simply cried in wilderness in asking mankind to lead a life of absolute dispassion and continence, spiritual culture and divine realisation leading to the indescribable bliss of Nirvana.

Renunciation and Service

There are two types of Sannyasins—the silent and the active. The quiet monk engaged in strenuous spiritual practice in solitude is holding before the world the highest ideal of life, and is thus doing immense good to mankind. His silence is more eloquent than the loquaciousness of many a so-called altruist. Physical help is not the only help that can be rendered. "Is it not possible," has said Pavhari Baba—the great saint of Ghazipore, "that one mind can help other minds, even without the activity of the body?" Side by side with this quiet type there have also been the active monks engaged not only in their own good but also in the physical, mental and spiritual welfare of others. To brand them as selfish and antisocial parasites is only to evince our own selfishness and thoughtlessness. Whatever the critics might say, these much maligned Sannyasins have been the greatest benefactors of society. Unburdened by the cares and anxieties of a small family they have worked disinterestedly for the well-being of the entire human family. And if they have not begotten children, by rendering service in various ways, by bringing to men the message of peace and harmony, and by creating harmony and love among them, they have been the saviours of innumerable lives and thus in the words of Swami Dayananda, "the cause of the increase of population" also. This is borne out by the history of the monastic orders in India. There have been "old-type" monks who have, besides spreading religious culture, built hospitals and schools, bridges along Himalayan gorges and rest-houses for pilgrims. Rightly does Swami Vivekananda say, "Take even an extreme case, that of an extremely ignorant Vairagi. Even he, when he goes into a village, tries his best to impart to the villagers whatever he knows, from "*Tulsidas*" or "*Chaitanya Charitamritam*," or "the Alvars" in Southern India. Is that not doing some good? And all this

only for a bit of bread and a rag of cloth?" Let the mock Sannyasins who put on the garb of renunciation in order to lead an easy-going and, sometimes, immoral life be condemned as strongly as the sham householders who take to the Grihasthashrama only for the enjoyments of the flesh. But let us not for Truth's sake class the absolutely unselfish and noble Sannyasins as idle vagabonds sucking the life-blood of society.

Sannyasa in India

The institution of Sannyasa in India has an interesting and eventful history of its own. In the pre-Buddhistic age the Sannyasin was mostly individualistic both in his private life and service to society. With the advent of Buddha, monastic life became to a great extent organised and also popular. The Buddhist missionaries came to spread the message of Dharma for the moral and spiritual elevation of people in different parts of the then known world, started universities for the spread of education, conducted hospitals for the relief not only of men but also of animals, and rendered service to society in manifold ways. But Buddhism laid undue stress on monasticism which became at once the source of its strength and weakness. As the result of the indiscriminate admission of men and women into the Order, monastic life became in many cases a travesty and bred vice and immorality. And these evils ultimately brought about the degeneration of the grand institution of Sannyasa. The task of purifying the monastic life fell on Sri Sankaracharya—the guiding spirit of Hindu revival,—who kept up the organisation but tried to stop the influx of undesirable elements, and inculcated strict mental discipline and spiritual culture on the members of the Order. Buddhism along with its institution of monks was gradually absorbed into Hinduism. But as the result of the misuse of Sannyasa, there came in Hindu society a reaction against the institution itself. Contrary to the old ideal of Chaturashrama or the four stages of life, some of the later law-givers came to praise the householder's life above that of the monk, and even went so far as to declare that none should take to the monastic life in this iron age! In spite of all this, Sannyasashrama has not perished. Nay, since the days of Sankara it has thrived well and has produced many of the greatest reformers and teachers of India. But along with it has also prospered the institution of beggars who put on the garb of the Sannyasin in order to carry on their trade. And as long as there will be rich householders over-anxious to get passports to heaven even through indis-

criminate charity, the evil cannot be stopped altogether. Whatever it may be, the current of Sannyasa has flown uninterruptedly up to the present day, and we have now entered what may be said to be the fourth age in the history of Sannyasa in India. And it has begun since the advent of Sri Ramakrishna.

Sri Ramakrishna and the Ideal of Sannyasa

Sri Ramakrishna has proclaimed to our modern world the ancient ideals of Sannyasa with a new power and meaning. He led the life of one-pointed spiritual striving that revealed to him the Divine glory in all its splendour. He renounced "woman" but looked upon her not as a "gateway to hell" but as the embodiment of the Mother of the universe. He also renounced "gold" the very touch of which was impossible for him to bear. But it was this all-renouncing monk again who melted to see the misery of "God in human forms" and wanted that they should be served by their more fortunate brethren who should regard themselves as "stewards of the Lord." Sri Ramakrishna's ideal of renunciation is inseparable from Divine Love and his Divine Love, from service to the God in man. The path of service he has laid before us is to be taken up in a spirit not of egotism but of humility and devotion and is to be undertaken primarily for our welfare. He says :—"If one gives away anything in charity with the spirit of non-attachment, he does it for his own good, and not simply for doing good to others. He thereby serves God who resides in all beings, and service unto God means helping one's own self." Understood in this light, service becomes a form of worship. Renunciation which realises itself through spiritual practice and service to the Daridra Narayana or God in the poor, becomes a means of self-effacement and Divine vision. Life is to be transformed into one of constant dedication. The body that is nourished with food, the mind that is developed through study, the soul that is evolved through religious discipline—everything is to be laid down for the service of the God in the poor, the ignorant and the care-worn. It is the vision of the God in man that made Swami Vivekananda, the greatest disciple of Sri Ramakrishna—pray with a heart overflowing with Love—"May I be born again and again and suffer thousands of miseries, so that I may worship the only God that exists, the only God I believe in, the sum-total of all souls! Blessed are we that we are given the privilege of working for Him, not helping Him." It was the earnest desire of the Swami to express the monastic ideal, through quiet religious

practice, silent preaching and spiritualised social service, as well as to organise the monks and their strivings "for the emancipation of their own souls and for the good of the world." He wanted to prevent Sannyasa from lapsing into dry intellectualism and morbid inactivity, and to stop at the same time indiscriminate charity that is greatly responsible for the so-called "religious vagrancy." With these ideal in view did he inaugurate the Ramakrishna Brotherhood which he wanted to be universal in its spiritual vision, synthetic in its cultural outlook and all-embracing in its ideal of service. And to the members of the Order as well as to all monks and householders alike he has left the message of Sannyasa in these memorable terms—"First let us be gods, and then help others to be gods. The national ideals of India are renunciation and service. Intensity her in those channels and the rest will take care of itself."

THE DOCTRINE OF EXPERIENCE AS THE ONE SELF

By Prof. K. Sundararama Iyer, M.A.

IX. MAYA IN THE LIGHT OF SCIENCE

While the scientific conception of Nature means, or refers to the sum-total of the manifested material objects in the universe, whether coming under the category of the useful or the aesthetic, the Vedantic conception of *Maya* (or *Prakṛiti*) rises beyond both those classes and postulates what may be conceived as their one and homogeneous material cause or source (*Upadanākāraṇa*),—the potency or energy (*śakti*) which is both phenomenal and *supernatural* in the sense that it is beyond what is manifested as natural objects. Such a conception of *Maya* is also *rational*, for it satisfies the craving of the faculty of reason in the ordinary human mind obsessed with the objects of sense-perception—*i. e.*, the mind which has not risen to a conception of what is *Nitya* (permanent) as opposed to the changing (*anitya*) and therefore demands origins or explanations of the events and appearances of the phenomenal world.

Dalton's theory that *every element is composed of atoms* claims to be able to offer full satisfaction to the mind of the modern inquirer which is searching for the origin of phenomena. The atom is to be conceived as the smallest part of an element which

takes part in any known chemical reaction, and every element is composed of small equal particles or atoms. Further, since the time of the late James Clerk Maxwell, the instantaneous propagation of electric and magnetic actions in space separating electrified bodies has been investigated, and the result has been to demonstrate the existence of electro-magnetic waves acting within such space (or field) exactly like light-waves. This 'field' theory had led to the overthrow of the older idea of action at a distance,—i. e., that action between distant bodies was propagated through the material continuum (or space) separating them. It is now held that electricity is itself probably atomic in constitution and that negative electric currents and charges are propagated by means of sub-atomic electric particles in movement, now named *electrons*. We thus see that matter (or mass of the electrical field) consists of nothing but electric charges and their results. Professor Bertrand Russell says:—"It is thought that matter consists of electrons and protons which are of finite size and of which there are only a finite number in the world." And further:—"Given the laws governing the motions of electrons and protons, the rest is merely geography—a collection of particular facts telling their distribution throughout some portion of the world's history. The total number of facts of geography required to determine the world's history is probably finite." Further, Prof. Bertrand Russell points out that man as he is manifested or known to us is a part of this physical world. His body like other matter is composed of electrons and protons which, so far as we know, obey the same laws as those not forming part of animals or plants." Also, "what we call our thoughts seem to depend upon the organisation of tracks in the brain in the same sort of way in which journeys depend upon roads and railways. The energy used in thinking seems to have a chemical origin; for instance, a deficiency of iodine will turn a clever man into an idiot. Mental phenomena seem to be bound up with material structure."

Now, it is easy to see that the reasoning faculty in man which seeks for origins cannot remain satisfied with the scientific theories above propounded according to which the origin of all the objects in the world is to be found in electrons and protons and the laws governing their motions. The Vedanta attempts to meet the further demands of the reason, and postulates the existence of Maya to account for the existence of even such phenomena or facts as electrons and protons recently discovered by scientific investigators. But how has Maya been discovered? On what authority

are we asked to accept it as a *fact*? The reply is given in the *Svetasvatara Upanishad*:—"By resorting to the process of meditation (*dhyana-yoga*) the sages *directly perceived* the creative power (*śakti*, i. e., *maya*) of the divine being (*devatma*), (which exists) though concealed by its own (evolving) *Gunas*,"—the three constituent material substances known as *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*. *Maya* is thus an *experience of the sages in their practice of the method of meditation*. Hence, it is not a mere *appearance*, and still less a *symbol* of such appearance. For, *maya*, as a fact and experience, can never be stultified as long as the material world exists in any of its three states (of origin, manifestation, destruction). Further a *symbol* is only "a mere help or expedient to facilitate our viewing things," and so is not and need not be an experience (or even appearance) in the concrete. *Maya* is therefore something far higher—an existing fact or experience discovered by the sages in their process of meditation as the material cause (*Upadanakarana*) of the manifested phenomena of nature. It takes the human mind *behind* all such manifested phenomena, and is to be accepted as the material causal source and origin of them all.

In order to further elucidate the conception of *Maya*, we shall refer to the following passage from the *Rig-Veda*:—"Then (i. e., during the time of *pralaya*, universal destruction) there was neither *asat* nor *sat*" (X, Sukta 119, Rik 1). *Asat* means a pure negation, a mere fiction of the imagination contradicting all our experience (or conception) of objects possessing a name or form, as for example, the horn of a hare. *Sat* is an object (or phenomenon) of experience, actual or possible, and so capable of being realised or conceived as having a form and name. If before creation neither of these two classes of objects existed, then what was there? The same *sukta* (hymn), Rik 3 says:—"Before creation there existed darkness (*tamas*) enveloped by darkness (*tamas*)."
Sayanacharya explains it as follows: "By *tamas* is here meant, the ignorance (*ajñana*) positive in its nature (*bhava-rupa*), and having also *maya* as another proper name (*samjna*)" "Even as the darkness of the night hides all objects from the view, so the ignorance positive in its nature which has *maya* as another proper name for it and conceals the Atman, the One reality, is here called *tamas*." We learn also from the *Svetasvatara Upanishad*:—"Know *prakṛiti* (primordial causal matter) to be *maya* (illusory manifestation or magical enchantment); and the supreme Lord (*maheśvara*) to be *mayi* (the magician who produces the illusion or enchantment)."

Thus in the Veda and Vedanta, a primordial matter which is of the nature of ignorance (*tamas*) and illusion (*maya*) is made to account not only for the origination of the manifested objects in nature, but also for the *elements* out of which they are composed, viz., the fine atoms, or even the finer electrons (entering into the composition of atoms) which scientific theory is now led to postulate. The *Svetasvatara Upanishad* calls *prakṛiti* by the name of *maya* (i. e. illusion or appearance). Hence, the material objects or phenomena of the universe issuing—through Isvara's creative resolve, out of *Prakṛiti* are all unreal like the deceptive appearances produced by the power of enchantment possessed by a magician (*magi*, as Isvara too, is called in this same Upanishad). Thus, however real both *Prakṛiti* and the objects of the phenomenal universe may seem to us when we have an experience of them, they are all stultifiable (*badhya*) by our knowledge of Brahman. For they do not, and cannot, exist independently of Brahman. Brahman alone is the support of both *Prakṛiti* (*maya*) and of the objects of the phenomenal world springing from it when conditioned by *Maya*. Till the time for creation comes through such a conditioning process we must understand that the "energy (*maya* or *śakti*) of the self-effulgent Self (*devatma*) is hidden by its own (constituent) *gunas*,"—i. e., the three material substances (viz., *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*) evolved from *Maya*. (*Svetasvatara Upanishad*). There are various passages which similarly teach that the pure self, when conditioned by *Maya-Prakṛiti*, is the one cause of the variegated phenomena manifested to the senses (and mind) in the world of matter.

We shall now consider our present topic—*Maya* in the light of science from another point of view. According to modern knowledge (science) there are not only things in themselves valuable, but there are also things which are only valuable in relation to other things. As regards these latter, concrete labour of one kind or another is indispensably needed to produce the change they must undergo in order to gain such a value,—and hence there is no immediacy or finality of value—i. e., when no such labour has been exerted upon them—in any conception we may form of them. In the Vedanta, on the other hand, the conception of Brahman is taught to us as the only one entity or reality which is in itself ever unchanging and unrelated to any other existence of any kind, similar or dissimilar;—and yet through its (falsely postulated) identification with *Prakṛiti* (*maya*), we get involved in the conception of a divine personality creating and preserving what is actually perceived (or known) by us in the

world of phenomena. The latter—*i. e.*, the objects of the phenomenal world—have thus only a derived and relative value. The Brahman or self alone has an independent, intrinsic, and true value as the one noumenal (or absolute) reality.

Further, all the changes which we perceive or produce in the objects around us stand related to the various *ends* or *values* we have in view and hope to reach. There is thus in nature not only incessant change, but a goal to attain. On the other hand, the Vedantic conception of Brahman (or Experience as the one self) teaches us that it is not at all a goal, good, or end to be attained by any labour of ours, but that it is a *siddha-vastu*, an ever present entity—*i. e.*, a perfect and permanent (*nitya*) being and therefore not one effected and brought into being so as to have a value conferred upon it, the innermost self-effulgence of the Bliss which is alone and absolute in value, irrespective of time, place and circumstance.

Further more, modern scientific pragmatism holds that "reality is ever in the making,"—that knowledge, experience, cognition, can have a meaning only in relation to the qualities perceived by us in the objects around us. But as already shown, there can be no such world of "realities in the making" without the Vedantic (and reasoned) postulates of *Brahman* and *Maya* and the congruous conception of a Divine Ruling personality to which they logically lead.

IDEAL HUMANITY

By R. Ramakrishnan, B.A.

The future of Humanity is a great and puzzling question about which several solutions have been offered, perhaps all of them equally disappointing and unconvincing. This great problem of the probable future of mankind has attracted the attention of many but those who have tried to solve it have not found it an easy task; for man is obviously not omniscient and he has not the power to look into the future. The only thing he can do in trying to offer solution to this elusive problem is to study the past and the present history of humanity and make inferences and guesses regarding its future. Whether the solutions thus inferred in the light of partly recorded past history and the present state of humanity and contemporary tendencies and forces at work are correct is a matter for the historian of the future to decide. Broadly speaking there are two distinct sets of opinions on this question—each entirely opposed to and contradicting the other.

The one we may call the orthodox or the old view and the other may be termed the scientific view. Both these views have found equally vehement exponents. One class of men holds that the future of mankind is a dark one. Those who share this view are to be found among the old orthodox people of our country. They believe that there was a golden age of humanity when peace and justice reigned on earth and when deceit, sin and treachery had no place in this planet of ours. That there was a golden age in the history of mankind is put forward by every religion. That the present state of man is a state of deterioration and decay is perhaps true. This is the kernel of truth behind Adam's fall in Christian mythology. People who hold this view say that mankind to-day is not as virtuous, pure and chaste as of old. The future is to be a dark and gloomy age is their conviction. They are horrified to find the present state of society and the unobstructed sway of organised selfishness. The other view—the scientific view—is just the opposite. Exponents of this view hold that the golden age of humanity is yet to come and that we are marching towards that goal. The inventions of science and the progressive march of civilisation, they believe, will lead us to that goal. According to them, the past ages were the primitive and undeveloped stages. Mankind has been slowly progressing on from bad to good, from good to better and the best is yet to be.

Which of the views is the correct one? We say that both of them are right and both are wrong. Two facts lead us to that conclusion. Those who hold that there was a golden age in man's history which can never come back are equally mistaken as those who hold that the past history of man was a dark one. History repeats itself. As Swami Vivekananda says, 'uniformity is the rigorous law of nature; what once happened can always happen.' If there ever could have been a brighter age, it necessarily follows that it must come back. Besides this uniformity in nature's happenings, there is one other fact we should take account of. We cannot believe in a state of mankind which was all good and all perfect even as we cannot believe in a state which will be all evil. If by the term 'golden age' the exponents of the orthodox view mean an ideal state of humanity, a state of perfection, they are entirely mistaken. To quote what Swami Vivekananda says on a different occasion, 'This theory on the face of it is absurd and puerile, because it cannot be. There cannot be good without evil or evil without good. To live in a world where it is all good and no evil is what Sanskrit logicians call a 'dream in the air'. Good and evil, virtue

and vice must ever be found in this world mixed with each other. A state of absolute perfection and a state of absolute chaos and sway of evil are both mere unrealisable dreams.

Then a pertinent question may be put to us—'What do you mean by your ideal humanity if you say that a state of perfection can never reign on earth? You seem to contradict yourself.' We shall answer the question. Though good and evil, virtue and vice must ever be found mixed up in this world and though it is true that an absolute state of perfection or of complete chaos is impossible, yet the proportion in which good and evil are mixed up may vary from time to time to a great extent. Among individual men we distinguish between the good and virtuous and the bad and vicious. Thereby nobody means that one man is all good or that another is the reverse. In one man good predominates while in another evil is predominant. Even in the worst villain there must be a taint of goodness, a drop of nobility at least; so also the purest of mortals will not be free from a slight imperfection. Man and the world are by their very nature imperfect. When man becomes perfect,—as certainly he can and will—he ceases to be man; he becomes God. And so what we mean by an ideal state of humanity is that in which there will be found the maximum of good mixed, needs must be, with the minimum of evil. That undoubtedly is possible. That is what we conceive to be mankind's golden age. That such a glorious age must come we sincerely believe; we also hope we are marching towards that goal. Action and reaction are equal and opposite. True to that, from this present state of chaos and unquietness will evolve a state of calm, peace and tranquillity, not perhaps unexampled in the long history of humanity, but none the less welcome and soothing to the wearied race of mortals.

What are the characteristic features of such an ideal state of humanity is not very easy to describe. It is imperative on all of us to labour hard and put our shoulders to the wheel in order to herald that welcome and blessed age in our history. For one thing, an ideal is necessary for the progress of mankind. Lack of idealism said a thinker causes the soul to perish. Perhaps we may never realise our ideal but only if we fix that as our goal and proceed towards it can we hope to progress farthest. He who aims at the tree will do better shoot at the star. Everyone should have his own ideal, his own goal and must not stop till he reaches that place; he must be eternally striving to realise it—be

it for all eternity. Our goal in view may after all be an ever receding El Dorado; but still our eyes should rest on that shining far away goal. Therein lies our progress. The very same idea is expressed in a short and suggestive sentence pregnant with meaning, by that most imaginative of living English novelists H. G. Wells: 'Mankind progresses in Utopias.'

Having thus established the necessity for a fundamental conception of an ideal state of humanity which alone would make the march of progress safe, we shall now proceed to describe as far as is possible, the salient features and important facts about that glorious age to ensue. As progress means a comprehensive and an all round development we shall describe the ideal state taking the several spheres of human activity.

Talking on the 'Necessity of Religion,' Swami Vivekananda says, 'Of all the forces that have worked and are still working to mould the destinies of the human race nothing is more potent than the manifestation of which we call religion.' There have been many religions on earth and the one sad fact 'too deep for tears' about them is the unceasing war of creeds and conflict of religions. 'More blood has been shed in the name of God than for any other cause,' said the Swami Vivekananda once. It is high time that this state of affairs ceases. The followers of the several religions must realise that the 'Reality is one, though sages call it by various names.' Every religion is but a way to God—may be one path is straight, another crooked and so on. There is no bond so potent for unifying men as the bond of a common religion. As such humanity must be made to realise that all men are the Children of God and are equal in His eyes. Every race has had its own peculiar line of development and this has resulted in different manners and customs. Peace will reign on this earth only when universal brotherhood becomes an established fact. No other force will contribute more to bring about that healthy mentality than the ideal of a universal religion. We are all come from one Unity and are bound to go back to that Unity. We should see unity in this vast ocean of diversity. If a day will come when race will look on race in the spirit of comradeship and love, then will we have neared that glorious age.

Perhaps the most tragic state of affairs throughout man's history is to be found in the present-day political activities of the world. The great war has done enough havoc and has brought untold misery on all nations. The 'Big Powers' have organised

themselves into an unholy alliance and under the high sounding names of world-peace and international justice, they are plundering weaker nations. The modern Nation is a great menace, as Tagore shows in his admirable lectures on 'Nationalism.' By 'Nation' Tagore means, 'the organisation of politics and commerce' or 'that aspect which a whole population assumes when organised for a mechanical purpose.' And he goes on to describe the evils of the sway of the Nation 'Not merely the subject races but you who live under the delusion that you are free are everyday sacrificing your freedom and humanity to this fetich of nationalism, living in the dense poisonous atmosphere of world-wide suspicion and greed and panic. . . . The newly converted fanatic of nationalism believes that the only brotherhood possible in the modern world is the brotherhood of hooliganism. . . . I ask you what disaster has there ever been in the history of man, in its darkest period like this terrible disaster of the Nation fixing its fangs deep into the naked flesh of the world, taking permanent precautions against its natural relaxation? Clever lies have become matters of self-congratulation. Solemn pledges become a farce--laughable for their very solemnity.' But the reaction has set in already; the smaller nations have begun to rebel and struggle for freedom. The oppressed and the suppressed for long are renouncing their shackles and are rising to assert their right to equal and impartial treatment. Unless the powerful nations respond to their persistent call, woe shall be theirs. The poet sings how Heaven's wrath will fall on the 'Nation':

'The naked passion of self-love of Nations in its drunken delirium of greed is dancing to the clash of steel and the howling verses of vengeance.

The hungry self of the Nation shall burst in a violence of fury from its own shameless feeding,

For it has made the world its food,

And licking it, crunching it and swallowing it in big morsels,
It swells and swells

Till in the midst of its unholy feast descends the sudden shaft of Heaven piercing its heart of grossness'.

Nations should meet on a footing of equality and without the least suspicion or distrust at heart. Without that openness of behaviour and a deep sincerity on the part of the Nations, any number of Leagues of Nations and Peace Conferences and Inter-

national meetings will be of no avail. Happy will be the day when the two things of which the poet dreams—The Parliament of Man and the Federation of the World—will be accomplished facts. Similarly in the field of trade and commerce a happier state of affairs should set in. Self-aggrandisement should cease to be the primary motive upon which a nation's activities are decided. The 'maximum good of the maximum number' should become the ideal of people in their behaviour towards one another.

How far would 'civilisation' have progressed when the promised state of glory sets in? True civilisation does not consist in mere multiplication of scientific inventions. For one thing, the greater the number of inventions, the greater become the attendant dangers. There might not have been aeroplanes in the good old days; but mankind then would not have experienced the heart-rending disasters so common now a-days. Nothing is new under the sun is a good old truth pregnant with meaning. Then there is another fact to remember. The sum-total of energy displayed in the universe is constant throughout. So we cannot say from the mere multiplication of inventions and novel comforts for man that the world has progressed. True civilisation consists in the sway of righteousness on earth when man will become more good, more just, more true in his relation to man, control his greed, make life wholesome in its simplicity and let his consciousness of the divine in humanity to be more perfect in its expression; then will he be civilised and not when he flies across the air and fancies he has controlled nature. Civilisation is more a thing of the soul. Anything that kills man's soul and makes him a slave to sensual desires—you can call it by any other name; but it certainly is not civilisation. Man in his fullness is not powerful but perfect.

It is in the sphere of social relations that the greatest changes should take place. There should be no oppression of the weak by the strong; no class should tyrannise over another class. The interests of capital and labour should become identical. The tyranny of man over man should become a thing of the dead past. Individual liberty should not be suppressed. Everyone must be free. Education should become, in the words of Swami Vivekananda, the manifestation of the perfection already in man. The interests of society should be placed above those of the individual. In this God's world there is no need for anybody to die of starvation; there is plenty everywhere. But why should there be such misery and suffering here? In God's garden of beauty why

should even one mortal wail and weep? Because of the selfishness of a brother mortal. Why should one man be stuffing his stomach with more than the necessary quantity of food, while just by his side a brother—a Daridra Narayana—starves without a morsel? How happy would it be if the superfluous food at one home is transferred to the needy fellow on the roadside? As Mahatma Gandhi puts it somewhere, every superfluous morsel of food that we take in is so much robbed from a poor man's mouth. The revolutionary movements of Socialism and Bolshevism were right in their basic motives: but they have failed and have produced so much harm quite against their intentions because they were mistaken in their means. Bolshevism, as a great soul suggested must be made Vedantic and if done so, it will be deprived of all its horrors and will also become practicable.

That, in a way, is a very meagre account of the ideal humanity that is to be. Mankind has a glorious heritage behind it and a more glorious future in front. The present is but a transitory stage. The same vision of a happy future for humanity, of a time when this earth will be a 'heaven of freedom' is also perceived by the poet and in his immortal song overflowing with poetic beauty he describes it as a place:

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high,
Where knowledge is free,

Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by
narrow domestic walls,

Where words come out from the depth of truth,

Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way in the
dreary desert sand of dead habit,

Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection,

Where the mind is led forward by Thee into ever-widening
thought and action,

That is exactly what we mean by the 'golden age' in the history of humanity. How glorious indeed! May everyone of us be gifted with the power to contribute our mite to the task of heralding that glorious era, of bringing that 'heaven of freedom' in this earth of ours!

REMINISCENCES OF SISTER NIVEDITA

By Prof. Jadunath Sarkar

VICE-CHANCELLOR, CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY

I

In 1902, just before the Durga Puja, Sister Nivedita spent a week at Buddha-Gaya. In response to her call I also went there from Patna. A few hours after my arrival she reached from Calcutta accompanied by Dr. Rabindranath Tagore, Sir Jagadish-chandra Bose, Gupta Maharaj (Swami Sadananda—formerly an employee in the Gaya Railway Station), his nephew (whom the Sister always addressed simply as 'nephew') and Swami Saradananda. The guest house of the Mahant was fixed for our accommodation. The day-time we spent in discoursing on various topics relating to the life and teachings of the Lord Buddha, and in the bright shade of the cool evening we would meditate sitting under the great Bow Tree, or silently reflect on the past glory of the Buddhistic Age. We visited all the ancient monuments round the Temple of Buddha-Gaya and discussed on them. At the sight of the thunder-bolt-marked seat of the great Master in the midst of jungles, enshrined in a lowly tile-shed almost on the verge of ruin, the Sister remarked: "He who sacrifices himself for truth becomes as powerful as a thunderbolt in the service of the gods."

Then and there she decided that this emblem of thunderbolt should shine in the national flag of modern India. And many to-day use this mark of thunderbolt as an emblem. Sir Jagadis too, has accepted this mark as the emblem of his famous "Bose Institute" of Calcutta.

One day in the afternoon the Sister took us to a neighbouring deserted homestead land and said: "Perhaps here stood Sujata's house. She was the daughter of the village-chief. Her character, how great, how sweet! Verily, an ideal for the householders. This is a place of pilgrimage to us" This was followed by the reading out of a few chapters from Edwin Arnold's *Light of Asia*.

During our sojourn there we met an old Japanese pilgrim staying at Buddha-Gaya. His name was Phuji. He was a fisherman by caste. He came there to fulfil his long cherished desire of seeing the holy Bow Tree. Before starting on his pilgrimage he had laboured hard in his own country to earn a decent amount for

meeting his travelling expenses. He stayed at Buddha-Gaya for a year or two; and every evening he would worship the Lord Buddha under the Bow Tree by chanting Mantras and that in Sanskrit!

II

Sister Nivedita used to say: In the beginning, "Buddhism was only Hinduism reformed - neither a new nor a hostile religion. Buddha declared that he himself was a Hindu reformer, like the followers of Sri Chaitanya who called themselves purer and better Hindus; or like the Ramakrishna Order who are within the Hindu fold and perfectly Hindus in their religious faith, although they consider the teachings of their Master as the purest and best interpretation of the Hindu religion befitting the present age. Many years after the passing away of the Lord Buddha, sectarianism and bigotry usurped the place of true philosophy and gospel of the Blessed One and the Buddhists formed themselves into a quite separate sect.

And it was for this reason that the Sister became exceedingly glad when Prof. Cecil Baldol and Mahamahopadhyaya Haraprasad Sastri, returning from Nepal, proved, by the help of antiquity that both Hinduism and Buddhism existed there side by side in a friendly relation for centuries.

III

On another occasion - the railway line upto Rajagriha was then not open - the Sister went out to see the ruins of Rajagriha, the famous capital of Magadha, hallowed by the holy dust of Buddha's feet. Somehow she was detained there. And the next evening she had to deliver a public lecture at Lucknow and this had been widely circulated.

In those days by journeying all the way from Rajagriha to Bihar Sharif in Ekka (single-horse carriage), a man could not be in time to catch the train of that Light railway line and so he would have to wait there till the following day.

But Nivedita with the help of a single guide crossing over the most formidable hills of Rajagriha walked almost the whole night, a distance of eleven miles through the lonely forests abounding with most ferocious animals like tigers and bears, and reached Tilaiya, a Railway station on the E. I. R., where she entrained herself and arrived at Lucknow just in time and thus kept her word.

IV

Once in the Khuda Baksh Library of Patna, while the old Persian manuscripts and pictures were being turned over, the first page of the illustrated history of the Timur Dynasty was held before her eyes. And that contained the signature of the Emperor Shajahan. The Sister at once asked, "May I touch it?" And the permission was granted. Then the Sister, placing her hand on the signature and closing her eyes for a while began to picture in her mind's eye the glorious days of India under the Mughal rule.

Picking up a piece of broken ordinary brick from Nalanda (bearing neither the mark of any image nor any inscription - but belonging to the Pal Dynasty) and a similar bit of sand - plaster thrown away as useless from Saranath, she preserved them in her own reading room: and this helped her to visualise the picture of India in her palmy days.

She said: "If a man desires to love his own country, he must first know it; and in order to know it, he is to travel over it." In this connection she declared times without number that no real service can be rendered to the country merely by clapping of hands and thundering of voices in public meetings in big cities. She was extremely lavish of her praise for the students roaming over the mountains at Almora: and her praise for the pilgrimage in ancient India as being a great opportunity to acquire knowledge was equally profuse. She said: "Travel over the country: study the condition of the people from house to house, from village to village: then and then alone you will be fit to serve your country."

In 1902, as the President of the Hindu Students' Association, Bankipore, I invited Sister Nivedita and Swami Saradananda to deliver lectures in connection with its annual celebration. They gladly accepted the invitation; and the sitting extended over two days. At that time a great enthusiasm prevailed amongst the student community and the local gentry. And a welcome address was presented to the noble Sister.

But in the course of her reply to the address, instead of blindly eulogising the audience in the usual way, she held before their very eyes certain unpleasant but most useful truths.

She observed: "Plunge not yourselves in pride recalling the ancient glory of the Aryans or the Buddhistic Age. Their descendants are to prove the worthiness of their descent by noble deeds,

high thinking and their great renunciation and service. Be men ! Become men ! Never strike your flag to a foreigner. Through original research India will once more attract the world's homage ; hence every intelligent Indian's duty is to apply himself deeply in this work. And this work must be directed more towards science than philosophy. For, the recent discoveries in modern science by Sir Jagadishchandra Bose have amply demonstrated to the world at large that the brain of India is neither narrow nor dogmatic ; and that the Indians can even in this field occupy the foremost place as they did in Sankhya and Vedanta in ancient times. Proceed on and apply yourselves whole heartedly, my friends, to the modern scientific research and history on the same basis.

" Also, forget not that right up from the Vedic Age till to-day the stream of Indian history has been flowing on in the same course. Our relation with the past is great and most intimate. What we are to-day is the result of our noble heritage of the great past. And from this mighty tree of Indian culture and civilisation have branched out many a race and denomination ; so we can ignore none. In the past we accepted and assimilated what was best in others ; and it should be our endeavour now and in the future to follow the same. What I like to know is what is noble and best in a man or a nation ; and the rest (i. e., the defects) are all perishable and hence of no avail." *

NOTES AND COMMENTS

PROSELYTISM AND HINDUISM

"Conversion of original Non-Hindus to orthodox Hinduism," writes Professor Suniti Kumar Chatterjee in the *Hindu Mission Bulletin*, "with the authority of the Brahmins has ever been a common event in the History of the Hindu people." One of the outstanding piece of evidence, regarding this recognition of proselytism in Hinduism is noticeable in the Besenagar Pillar inscription in the Gwalior State. Commenting on this inscription the Journal observes, "It is in early Prakrit and Brahmi characters of the 2nd or 3rd century B.C. and is inscribed on a stone column which had the figure of Garuda, the divine bird, vehicle of Vishnu, on the top. The inscription records that this pillar, this "Garudadhvaja" of Vasudeva, the God of gods was set up by a Greek named Helidoros, the son of Dion, who was the

* Translated from the Ananda Bazaar Patrika.

ambassador from a Greek King of North-Western Frontier of India named Antikidas, to the court of a Hindu King Kasiputra Bhaglbhadra. Helidoros called himself a "Bhagavata" that is a follower of Vishnu, a Vaishnava." "This inscription is an incontrovertible evidence of orthodox Hindu proselytisation of foreign 'Mlecha' peoples in times before Christ." Nor is this all. Writes the Journal, "The Sakas, the Parthians and other foreign tribes were completely Hinduised, and in most cases they were accepted as Kshatriyas in the orthodox Hindu community. In two or three generations non-Indian names like Zamatika, Damayada, Kanishka, Huvishka, Mihirakula etc., gave place to Jayadaman, Rudradaman, Vasudeva, and other Sanskrit names, showing their Hinduisation." And it is a well-known historical fact that the Hindu Emperor Chandragupta Maurya accepted the daughter of Seleucus—the Greek ambassador in his court—as his royal consort without any opposition whatsoever from the Hindu community and no less an orthodox Brahmin than Chanakya was his chief minister.

It foreigners could be Hinduised and placed amongst the class of Kshatriyas of India even as late as five hundred years after the birth of Christ we cannot understand why the original Hindus who became for one reason or another, Mussalmans and Christians later on cannot be welcomed into the Hindu fold if they are willing to come back. But let it be clearly understood that conversion means a conversion of the heart as the pillar of the Greek bears witness. The view of the *Hindu Mission Bulletin* is nothing new. As early as 1899 the Swami Vivekananda to an interviewer of the *Prabudha Bharata* said in clear language that 'aliens have been converted in India for by crowds and the process is still going on' and as regards receiving back into Hinduism those who have been perverted from it he is said to have answered "certainly, they can and ought to be taken." "Returning converts," he added, "will gain their own castes of course. And new people will make theirs. You will remember that this has already been done in the case of Vaishnavism. Converts from different castes and aliens were all able to combine under that flag and form a caste by themselves, and a very respectable one too. From Ramanuja down to Chaitanya of Bengal, all great Vaishnava teachers have done the same." In the Sanatana Dharma of the Hindu the duty of enlightening the sensually disposed man is laid upon the highest caste—the Brahmin. He is to be the sun shining over all. If he fails to do this great duty enjoined by his Dharma the light that shines within is bound to be choked and extinguished. But the Lord

has even been merciful to this land of Dharma. Asks the Swami Vivekananda, "Did India ever stand in want of reformer? Do you read the History of India? Who was Ramanuja? Who was Sankara? Who was Nanak? Who was Chaitanya? Who was Kabir? Who was Dadu? Who were all these great preachers, one following the other, a galaxy of stars of the first magnitude? Did not Ramanuja feel for the lower classes? Did he not try all his life to admit even the Paraiah to his community? Did he not try to admit even Mahomedans to his own fold?" The great Swami saw the fallen lot of the Hindu and hence asked once Aswini Kumar Datta—the great Bengalee patriot—to go to the untouchables, the cobblers, the sweepers and others of their kind and shake off their shackles by founding schools for them and even investing them with the 'sacred thread'.

Hindu Society has been remarkable throughout its history for its assimilative power and for its power of absorption. And Hindu Law was once flexible as is plain from the admission of aliens into the broad fold of Hinduism. But with the advent of the British Courts of justice this current of natural evolution has been barricaded by the judgment of these courts. The West has always shown a tendency to be mechanical. The West has ever been fond of standardizing as an effect of this mechanical ideal. Otherwise we would not have had a Privy Council decision to-day which would not recognise a Non-Hindu becoming a Hindu. An ex-judge of the Madras High court recently declared thus, "In South India there were thousands and thousands of Christians at one time. Their descendants were all Hindus. In Southern India inter-marriages between Christians and Hindus were common until legislation interfered with it. . . . And conversions and reconversions were the results. Entire communities were brought into Hinduism; their priests were recognised as Brahmans and made it possible to conform into a life acceptable to Brahmanism." Natural growth having been abstracted by mechanical law the day has come for the state to legislate for all.

But the State that rules claims no kinship to the Hindu Society. So has arisen the confusion in India. Out of this confusion we see order coming slowly but surely on—an order which will make judges and courts in the land overrule their decisions. All India is in ferment. The so-called "Brahman" forfeited his claim to rule society by his inaction and the true Brahman is coming

forward for establishing the great and ancient Dharma. Swami Dayananda, Swami Vivekananda and to-day Mahatma Gandhi speak of the necessity of cleaning the Augean Stable of Hindu Society.

INDIA AND PROHIBITION

For not less than a generation temperance has been one of the prominent questions that has engaged the attention of all thoughtful men and women of this country. In the press and on the platform it has been widely discussed; seemingly futile attempts have been made off and on at picketing; and in the legislatures of many of the provinces the people's representatives have in no uncertain voice declared their attitude towards prohibition. So far no anti-prohibition resolution has been brought forward or passed by any of the religious, political, social, commercial or communal organisations in the whole of India. On the other hand there has been a vigorous movement amongst the toddy-drawing caste in South India to give up their ancestral trade. And some of the Indian states have stepped forward and issued strict prohibition orders within their own territorial limits. As a result of prohibition in her state the Begum of Bhopal declared some time back that great changes had come about amongst her people and particularly women had been immensely benefited by the measure.

This too has been the experience of the United States of America where drinking was strictly prohibited by the Volstead Prohibition Enforcement Code of 1919. Ever since the introduction of this measure, its opponents—the anti-Prohibitionists—and their wealthy comrades have tried their best to present to the world through cheap journalistic press that Prohibition has been against the will of the people; that the measure has been undemocratic; that instead of keeping man in a higher pedestal it has taken him down to a very low rung in the ladder of civilisation; and that this imposition has ended in a large wave of crime, unprecedented in the history of the United States. But all this denunciation stands on no stable ground. For in that democratic country it was after the ratification of the majority of the legislatures, and after the sanction of the House of Representatives and the Senate that it became law. Nor is it the explanation for the great wave of crime. This Act has been in the Statute book for the last 8 years. And Miss McDougall who recently visited the United States writing in the June number of the *Indian Review* states. "The first thing that strikes a visitor in

the absence of much that distresses one in England and Scotland. The glaring and ostentatious advertisements of alcohol and drink which keeps the lowest aspects of human nature before our eyes in Europe are refreshingly absent in America. There are no drink shops at the street corners, no drunken people about the streets. There is none of the loud and clamorous merriment which sometimes in England makes restaurants and railways unpleasant in the late evening. The places of public resort are more decent and decorous and there is in general a greater purity of the atmosphere and higher dignity in the intercourse of people with each other. *No one denies that Prohibition has been a financial success.* The quantity and efficiency of work done is greatly increased and the hours of labour are short and wages high. The standard of life of the manual labourer is the highest in the world." The writer's observations are fully borne out by the Salvation Army in America who testify to the fact that 75 per cent of their relief work previous to the Act was occasioned by drink while today not more than 15 per cent are attributed to this habit. That the number of arrests for drunkenness has been reduced by 500,000 tells its own tale. Not among the lower classes alone is this change visible. A professor of the Yale University and a member of its University Committee of Discipline—himself a non-Prohibitionist observes that the change in the student population is something "simply revolutionary." "Our Committee," he says, "was continually busy with cases of intoxication and disorders arising from it. Now we have practically no business of the kind to transact." Therefore for the large wave of crime that the anti-Prohibitionists attribute to this Act we have to look elsewhere for their explanation.

This is not all. American people have become more prosperous. Mr. Babson, the great American economist calculates that there has been at least an increase of a billion dollars now—which was formerly spent in salons and benefited the brewers—which has been deflected for increased comfort and expansion of trade. "Industrially," writes Professor Siddhanta in an illuminating article on the same subject in a recent issue of *the Welfare*, "Prohibition has been a real boon to America. America holds now the first place in the industrial world because she has added the industrial efficiency by banishing the drink evil. Since the Prohibition, America has prospered gloriously: a few examples are these,—(i) Savings deposits multiplies $2\frac{1}{2}$ times from 1914 to 1924, while the number of depositors increased $3\frac{1}{2}$ times. (ii) The

amount of new industrial insurance per month increased from \$ 61,484,000 to \$ 292,094,000 between 1917 and 1924. (iii) As to the employee ownership, most of the big companies report great progress; employees own very large number of shares in companies like Bell Telephone System, U. S. Steel Corporation, Standard Gas and Electric Co., Armour and Co., Swift and Co., Sears Roebuc Co., International Harvester Co., etc., etc. (iv) There is a growth of Labor banks. (v) In the business world, the credit business done in the past five years has been one of the most magnificent and interesting developments to a business man. And so on."

"All this show that the ethics of business is sound now. Ethically, and morally America is now superior to most 'wet' nations. There is comparative peace in the home, safety in industry and honesty in individual and social dealings."

In this country which has from time immemorial stood for abstinence and where the use of liquor has been religiously forbidden, that more than six million gallons of this maddening stuff is sold staggers all thoughtful Indians. The fact that it brings a net revenue of over fourteen millions of pounds sterling to the Exchequer made the Government once argue against Prohibition as "impracticable!" Yet it is not only Mussalmans and Hindus that have advocated this most necessary step to-day for the welfare and prosperity of India's people; even Europeans in India have condemned it and stigmatised the policy of Government as nothing short of "Criminal apathy," as this revenue was from an "admitted vice." The law of Dharma has not two views on this subject. It could only declare with the ruler of Bhopal "The loss of revenue is nothing when compared with the greater happiness and welfare of the people." We would also appeal to the temple trustees of South India to follow Dharma and give up leasing their vast estates for this nefarious purpose.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

Dynamic Religion. By Swami Prabhavananda. Published by the Vedanta Society, Wheelton Annex, 10th and Salmon Streets, Portland, Oregon, U. S. A. Pp. 50.

The book before us contains five lectures of Swami Prabhavananda. They are clear and forceful and give the reader a fairly

comprehensive idea of what true spiritual life means and the method for its attainment. Religion has come to mean for the West "cash, comfort, bank account." Religion is not mere "success, health or prosperity", says Swami Prabhavananda in these lectures nor could one get 'religion' or 'yoga' from those charlatans whom one finds in large numbers to-day in America trading in yoga! His fine lectures comprise the following subjects :—

"What is Yoga", "Fullness of Life," "The Art of Living,"
 "The Acid Test of a Teacher," "The Path of Discipleship."

Even the thoughtful East begins to get dazzled at the material splendours of the West. At such a juncture a lucid exposition on where "spiritual life is enshrined and how it may be awakened and developed" will, we are sure, be welcomed by both the East and the West.

The Bhagavad-Gita, or the Lord's Song. By Annie Besant. Published by G. A. Natesan and Co., Madras. Pp. 264. Price annas four.

Though a Smṛiti the Bhagavad Gita has been always classed amongst the Upanishads and its teachings remain as fresh today as ever. We have now more than a dozen renderings of this great book in English. But we dare say we have not such a cheap rendering of it in English with the text in Devanagari as Dr. Besant's and published by G. A. Natesan & Co., Madras. Its popularity amongst the English knowing people is evident from the fact that it has gone to the 6th edition and all-told over 95000 copies have been sold. We congratulate the Publishers for this noble enterprise.

Nirvana. By Mr. George S. Arundale. Published by the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras.

In the preface to this book, the author says that for a good part of his life he never troubled himself with matters spiritual. But it would appear that one night he "suddenly awoke with a most vivid remembrance of a supreme exaltation, of a marvellous expansion of consciousness absolutely indescribable." He has called this marvellous expansion of consciousness as "Nirvana". There are many glowing passages in the book which reflect the rapid and wonderful change in his out-look of life. If as the author has recorded in the book he perceived divinity in the

fountain pen with which he was writing his book, grand, indeed, must be his realisation.

There are many passages which may be found here and there interspersed in the book clearly pointing out that the Nirvana described in the book is apparently not the Nirvana—the Summum bonum of Life which Buddha the Enlightened discovered and promulgated to the suffering humanity.

Again there are many sentences in the book of a prophetic and egotistical nature which considerably mar its attractiveness and usefulness. The metaphysical truths explained in the book seem to be merely paraphrases of the sentiments of the sages of India as recorded in the Hindu Scriptures and can therefore lay no claim to originality. It may on the other hand be said that they have been somewhat twisted and distorted.

There is no doubt that an endeavour has been made in the book to show that the realisation of the transcendental enables a man not only to change his out-look of life but to make his life infinitely happier and useful to humanity at large; and to this extent the author has indeed placed the public under a deep debt of gratitude.

Sarvatantrasiddhantapadarthaiakshanasangraha(Sanskrit)—By Bhikshu Gouri Sankar. 2nd edition. Revised and enlarged. To be had of Srimati Manbhari Devi, village Puthi, P.O. Jamal-pore, Dt. Hissar (The Punjab). Pp. 252. Price Re. 1. (Cloth-bound).

This little book contains the esoteric meanings of about twenty-seven hundred words expounded in the different Sanskrit texts. For want of clear apprehension of the meanings of words people are often led away from the true import of a passage, and their studies instead of bringing any good to them throw them in the midst of newer doubts and confusions. To remedy this difficulty, the author has made a good attempt in the present compilation. We hope, this booklet will be of great help to all students of Sanskrit. An index in the alphabetical order is attached at the end. Paper and printing, good. Nice get-up.

NEWS AND REPORTS

MEMORIAL SERVICE

On Sunday, August 28, 1927 the Vedanta Society of Portland Oregon, devoted the hour of the regular morning worship to a Memorial Service in honour of Srimat Swami Saradanandaji, the late Secretary of the Ramakrishna Mission. The service was conducted by Swami Prabhavananda. In his sermon the Swami pointed out that those who became followers of Sri Ramakrishna do not denounce other religions but consider them as many paths to the One Goal. The Swami also spoke of the Divine Wisdom shown by the Master in the selection of his disciples and told that Swami Saradananda was one of his chosen associates. The Swami also paid a high tribute to Swami Saradananda's literary achievements, to his work in America and to the ability he showed as Secretary of the Ramakrishna Mission ever since its inception.

THE NEW SECRETARY OF THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION.

We are very glad to announce that Srimat Swami Suddhanandaji Maharaj has been elected Secretary to the Ramakrishna Mission in place of the late Srimat Swami Saradanandaji Maharaj who entered Mahasamadhi on the 19th August last. The Swami is one of the foremost disciples of the illustrious Swami Vivekananda. And ever since his joining the Mission nearly three decades back, he has been serving it untiringly in various responsible capacities. He is a great scholar endowed with rare literary abilities. And for many years he conducted very ably the "*Udbodhan*"—the Bengali Organ of the Ramakrishna Order. He has done the monumental task of translating the entire works, both speeches and writings, of Swami Vivekananda into simple and elegant Bengali and has thereby greatly enriched the Bengali literature. He is also a powerful speaker, and by his impressive lectures as by his forceful writings he has helped the spread of Vedanta particularly in the province of Bengal. Readers of the *Vedanta Kesari* are familiar with the Swami's valuable writings which he has been kind enough to contribute from time to time.

He was also the Secretary of the Reception Committee of the last Ramakrishna Math and Mission Convention. And it was through his unbounded enthusiasm and unrelenting labours that the Convention proved to be a great success. The Swami acted as a Joint-Secretary of the Ramakrishna Mission until recently and is well acquainted with the history and workings of all the Math and Mission centres in India and abroad.

The responsibilities of Secretary have fallen on the right person. And we fully believe that the Swami's mature judgment, wide experience, vast erudition, great sympathy and unique devotion to principles will prove to be a source of great strength and inspiration to the members of the Mission, both individually and collectively.

SWAMI JNANESWARANANDA'S DEPARTURE FOR AMERICA

Swami Jnaneswarananda of the Ramakrishna Mission sailed from Calcutta for New York, U. S. A. by S. S. *City of Benares* on the 30th September last. He is being sent there by the authorities of the Ramakrishna Mission to assist Swami Bodhananda, the Head of the New York Vedanta Society, in his work of spreading the message of Vedanta inaugurated by the illustrious Swami Vivekananda.

The Swami founded the Ramakrishna Ashram at Patna, the premier city in the province of Behar and Orissa, and won for the institution the sympathy and support of some of the prominent citizens of the place by his personality and manifold activities. Last year he was elected one of the members of the newly constituted Working Committee of the Mission and was transferred to the Head-quarters at Belur. There he rendered valuable service, and also undertook successful lecturing tours in some of the districts in Bengal. By his sweet nature, sympathy and sound scholarship, he is sure to be a most efficient preacher of the Vedanta in America. May the Lord crown his labours with success!

RAMAKRISHNA MANDIR, TRIPLICANE, MADRAS

It was the wish of the late Sjt. S. Veeraraghavachariar, retired Asst. Cashier, Imperial Bank, Madras, when he gave his place of residence by a deed of absolute gift to the local Ramakrishna Mission that the hall of that house should be set apart for religious purposes. In accordance with his wishes, on the last Vijayadasami morning, the 6th of September, the above hall was consecrated by Swami Yatiswarananda, the President R. K. Mission, Madras, for the purpose. The inauguration ceremony of a Vedanta class came off the same evening. The Hon'ble Mr. Justice V. V. Srinivasa Aiyangar presided over the function. He exhorted the public to avail themselves of this splendid opportunity afforded to them by the Mission and announced that a weekly class on Srimad Bhagavatam would be conducted by Swami Yatiswarananda. Then the Swami pointed out the ideals for which the Ramakrishna Mission stood and explained how Swami Vivekananda illustrated in his own life

the great ideals of renunciation and service which after all were the ideals of every monk and every house-holder.

After Arathrikam and distribution of Prasadam the proceedings terminated with a vote of thanks to the chair and to the Swami Yatiswarananda.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAM, MALDAH

We are glad to receive the first general report of the above Ashram from 1924 to 1926. During the period under review the Ashram successfully conducted three night schools, one library, a charitable dispensary and daily religious classes. In the cholera epidemic of 1926 in Maldah, with the help of the Headquarters, the Ashram carried on relief work from five centres. Its other activities were Mela-relief, malaria and kala-azar relief, nursing, cremation, etc. The Ashram convened several meetings where distinguished speakers spoke; the workers also gave occasional religious discourses in the village. The introduction of Physical Culture Movement and Boy Scouts were mainly due to the efforts of its workers. The Ashram also observed the Birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda and others.

During the three years under report, the total amount received was Rs. 4384-5-0; the disbursement being Rs. 3161-6-0, there is a balance of Rs. 1221-15-0.

The Secretary appeals to the generous public for monetary help. We hope the public will liberally respond to it.

ABHOY ASHRAM, COMILLA.

The report for 1926 of the above Ashram is to hand. Its activities consist of (1) propagation of charka and khaddar; (2) social service; and (3) removal of untouchability and hereditary caste distinction.

The first item shows that the total output in eleven months was 1256 mds, valued at Rs. 1406-85 beating all previous records. The Ashram opened 9 production centres and 12 sale centres over five districts—Tipperah, Noakhali, Chittagong, Dacca and Bankura.

Under the second head, the Ashram maintained an out-door dispensary and an indoor hospital where 6215 and 85 patients respectively were treated. The medical school, and the Seva Samity form other important parts of the institution.

For realising the third object, the Ashram maintained a free school of 175 students all from the backward classes. In its Siksha Bhavan, a residential school for training up national workers 9

were admitted. The Ashram hopes to extend its activity in this direction if funds are forth coming. A scheme for making the Ashram self-supporting is attached to the report. About a lakh of rupees is estimated to be required to carry on the contemplated work in all directions.

The Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras acknowledges with thanks the following contributions for the publication of Tamil books.

Messrs. K. Subramaniya Chettiar, Tirupur Rs. 100; M. Nanjappa Chettiar and Sons, Tirupur Rs. 100; T. S. Sivasubramaniya Chettiar, Tirupur Rs. 50; K. R. Iswaramurthi Gownder, Tirupur Rs. 50. P.C.R. Narayanaswami Chettiar, Tirupur Rs. 50; Lakshminarayanawami Naidu, President, Taluq Board Palladam, Rs. 40; K. S. Ramaswamy Gownder Tirupur, Rs. 25; B. Venkatachala Mudaliar, B.A., B.L., Coimbatore Rs. 25; T. Krishna Chettiar, Coimbatore Rs. 25; T. A. Somasundaram Chettiar, B.A., Coimbatore Rs. 25; P. D. Asher & Co., Tirupur Rs. 25; K. Swaminatha Chettiar, Tirupur Rs. 25; K.C.V. M. Periasami Chettiar, Tirupur Rs. 25; Muthukumaraswami Gownder, Semmipalayam, Palladam Post Rs. 25; Ganapathi Gownder, Velappa Gowndenpalayam, Panikkampatti, Palladam Rs. 25; N. Swami Naidu, Anuppapatti, Palladam Rs. 25; S. Kumarappa Chettiar, Palladam, Rs. 25; N. Duraisamy Gownder, Chairman, Municipal Council, Tirupur Rs. 25; T.R.M.T. Thinnappa Chettiar, Palladam, Rs. 20; Banachand Devkaran, Tirupur, Rs. 15; P. S. A. R. Periakaruppan Chettiar, Palladam, Rs. 15; K. S. P. S. A. . Kuppanna Chettiar, Tirupur, Rs. 15; A Sympathiser c/o M. D. M. Factory, Rs. 15; V. K. Palaniappa Chettiar, Tirupur, Rs. 11; Hiralal Parekh Tirupur Rs. 11; Iswara Chettiar, B.A. B.L. Tirupur, Rs. 10; M. Dharmalingam Chettiar, Tirupur, Rs. 10; Cowasji Neoroji, Tirupur, Rs. 10; K.S. P. P. Kandaswami Gownder, Tirupur, Rs. 10; A. Friend, c/o A.P.C. Tirupur, Rs. 10; The Indian Cotton Co., Tirupur, Rs. 10; T. M. Sivasubrahmaniya Chettiar, Tirupur, Rs. 5; Odhawji Raghavji Roaji of M. D. M. Factory, Tirupur, Rs. 5; V.S.A. Ramlinga Chettiar, Tirupur, Rs. 5; J. S. Mahadev Rao, Tirupur, Rs. 5; Dwarakdas Narsi, Tirupur Rs. 5, Bhoja Raj Veera Mistre of M. D. M. Factory, Tirupur, Rs. 2. Total : Rs. 879-0-0.

We beg to acknowledge also the sum of Rs. 50 from Mr. Yasudian for the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home.

THE VEDANTA KESARI

"Let the lion of Vedanta roar."
"Let me tell you, strength is what we want
And the first step in getting strength is to uphold
The Upanishads and believe that 'I am the Atman.'"

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

VOLUME XIV]

DECEMBER 1927

[NUMBER 8

PRAYER

संगच्छन् संवदन् संवो मनांसि जानताम् ।
समानो मंत्रस्समिति स्तमानी ।
समानं मनस्सहचिस्समेवाम् ॥
समानी च आकृतिस्समाना हृदयानिवः ।
समानमस्तु नो मनो यथा वस्तुसहासति ॥

Brethren! meet together; talk together; let your minds apprehend alike!

Common be your prayer, common be your end; common be your purpose; common be your deliberation.

Common be your desires; united be your hearts; united be your intention, so that there may be a thorough union among you!

RIG VEDA, x, 191.

SPIRITUAL TALKS OF SWAMI BRAHMANANDA

(Continued from the last issue)

- Q. What rules are to be observed regarding food ?
Shall I accept whatever is offered to me or make any distinction ? Which is better, Madhukari (food gathered by begging from house to house like a bee) or food brought by chance ?
- A. At the time of Sadhana, a little discrimination in food is necessary. For there are some kinds of food which produce sleep, drowsiness, etc. ; and they are the worst enemies to a Sadhaka ; therefore it is always advisable not to take them at all. To eat much of sweet or sour thing is bad and *Kolai-dal* or any preparation of it is also greatly harmful to the growth of spiritual life. Things such as these stir up the *Tamas* (ignorance) in man. As a result he feels drowsy at the time of meditation and cannot make any progress in the spiritual path. So an aspirant must be very careful about his diet and eat only such food as are easily digestible. Under no circumstances he must fill more than two-thirds of his stomach and a third must be kept empty for the passage of the air. This will increase your strength and energy and you will be able to devote it to good account. But if you overload your stomach and keep no space for the passing of the air, you will have to spend all your energy in digesting the food. You will find no energy or inclination for meditation, and thus it will be a positive loss to you. Moreover, it may tell upon your health. As you know full well that good health is favourable to Sadhana, you must keep it by all means and hoard in something now when everything is in your favour.

As regards Madhukari, it is a very pure thing. It does not bind you to any obligations. But if you accept food from a particular person, it does so, and a fraction of your merit will go to that person. Madhukari is specially beneficial to those who cannot continue the flow of meditation without break and consequently requires some time for diversion. And instead of whiling away their time of diversion in idle talks, if they utilise it in Madhukari, they are thereby not only saved from the sin of killing time in vain, but also keep themselves free from the obligation of giving a portion of their merit in return for their food from any particular person.

Q. Is the vow of silence necessary at the time of Sadhana ? If so, what is to be done when some unavoidable circumstances compel its break or when the mind becomes irritated because of it ?

A. No, the vow of silence is not required as you understand by it. Forced silence and wild lavishing in talks both have their evil effects on man. To be silent in mind is surely better than the external silence, and so always try to follow the former. Moreover, instead of binding you with any forced silence, if you talk only so much as is required, it will not only do you no harm but will give you the same result as is attained by one observing absolute silence.

Q. How much clothing should a Sadhaka require ? And to what extent, heat and cold are to be borne up ? If any body offers any clothes to keep the body up from the ravage of heat and cold, should it then be accepted ?

A. As for clothing, you should keep only as much as is barely necessary to keep the body healthy and protect it from heat and cold. And bear in mind

that if those of delicate health practise much austerities, they will verily have their deserts. Your ideal is to realise God, not to exhibit unnecessary hardship. And as for the acceptance of any offer, you must sincerely judge it with reference to your utmost necessity. You may accept an offer only when you really feel a want for it ; otherwise reject it at once. To accept anything from any body for the purpose of hoarding is a sin unpardonable on the part of a Sadhaka.

Q. I know that both your noble self and the Lord have endless grace on me. Only bless me to realise it fully and well. Bless me also that my faith and devotion to you may be firm and unflinching. As I feel I have no power to do anything without your help, make me do as it pleases you—won't you—venerable sir ?

A. There's infinite strength in you. Never lose faith in yourself my boy, verily God is in you. And His grace too. He is gracious to all. Know it for certain that it is through His endless grace alone that you are able to be here under the banner of the Ramakrishna Order. It is again through His grace that you have found a good man to give you food and shelter during the period of your Sadhana. Have faith, therefore, have firm faith in Him. Work hard with unshakeable determination and He will make you know everything. Strive on unceasingly. You will know Him and you will realise His endless grace. Don't spend your time in vain. Go on with your Sadhana as instructed by them—the disciples of Sir Ramakrishna and continue it till you realise Him in this very life. Don't be troubled with big questions any more. Do something positive and make the best of this opportunity and be blessed.

I have answered all the questions. Now try to live them in life. From your letter I understand that the gentleman who has been giving you food and shelter is really a devotee. Rich men seldom spend money in good deeds ; and those that do so are very few in number. Your host has been doing so much for you ; see that his money is not wasted. You should live there in such a way that from your conduct his inclination for spending more in good deeds may be gradually increased. And as your benefactor will have a share of your merit and demerit both, do there only such work that will not make him suffer hereafter. Take care, don't run after name and fame. For, these things you would have plenty at home. Once when you have come out of their clutches try your utmost not to fall a prey to them again. Pray to Him with a sincere heart that even the least taint of this desire for name and fame may not soil your good heart. My love and best wishes to you and to our friend, your kind host. I always pray to the Lord that your desire may be fulfilled. May He give you good sense and make a man of you.

KARMA YOGA

ITS NATURE AND ITS GOAL

By K. S. Ramaswami Sastri, B.A., B.L.

Action is the law of life. But mechanical action is a burden and not a blessing. It is the duty and privilege of man to see far into things and to govern his life in a purposive way. Karma Yoga tells us in what way we can make action a means to higher ends. Mere movement leads to further mere movement. Purpose and guided movement alone leads to regnant peace.

When we reflect about the real nature of the soul we realise that it is the illuminer of the mind and is beyond the mind.

Time, space and causation are the conditions and forms of thought. The succession of ideas gives us the idea of time; the existence of ideas gives us the idea of space; and the idea of sequence gives us the idea of causation. But if we realise how the soul is the common factor in waking life, dream and deep sleep and is the witness of the mind, the senses, the body and the outside world, we can well realise how it is above and beyond time, space and causation. This self-awareness of the identity of the soul is the sheet-anchor of Indian philosophy. It is well stated in the *Panchadasi* by Sri Vidyaranya.

नोदेति नास्तमेत्येका सविदेका स्वयंप्रभा ।

The self-luminous radiance of the soul doth neither set nor re-arise upwards for ever.

Such being the nature of the soul, our activities are blessed if they lead us to that realisation. What is the means of arriving at this result? For this end we should understand the real nature of knowledge and work. All that nature brings to us is a series of vibrations. It is the mind that converts vibrations into sensations. Similarly the relativity of things and the fact that our body and ourselves and our mind are merely fragments of the cosmos really outside of ourselves must be constantly remembered by us. When we remember these aspects, work has a new meaning and value and purpose and result to us. If we identify our soul with the body, the senses and the mind, attachment increases and work done with attachment merely perpetuates itself and does not bring any higher results to us. But if we realise our true nature and then realise how the instruments of work which we use are really a portion of the cosmos, detachment increases and work done with detachment leads us to the permanent bliss of self-realisation and God realisation. If we merely revel in variety and acquisitiveness, our soul gets entangled more and more in sense-life. If we seek unity and renunciation, our soul rises to the highest heights of self-awareness and self-realisation. Self-knowledge is no doubt already in us but the process of unselfish work enables us to have a full and conscious realisation of it, just as we realise the measure of our strength through the discipline of a task.

Such is the Karma Yoga as apart from mere action. The diversities of past Karma have caused the present diversities of life. The infinite and infinitely various seeds of Vasanas (tendencies) sprout forth everywhere, grow and realise themselves in desires and then in actions. These in their turn

intensify the Vasanas (impressions and tendencies). And so the wheel goes on. "Reaction is the law of life." The best proof of the past existences is the present existence. The effect must have had a cause. Hence we must try to control our desires and subdue our Vasanas. Otherwise the varieties of work and Vasana and fruit will eclipse our real nature. Hence selfish action will only enlarge the values of desire and tendency, and will never lessen it. Therefore we must triumph over selfish action. How is this to be done? One means is, contemplating about the real nature of the soul as stated already. Another is the realisation of the real nature of our body, our senses and our mind. Another is doing work in the spirit of the repayment of a debt to humanity. We are born with the debts—the debts to our ancestors, the debts to our Rishis, and the debts to the gods. By working for the continuity of racial life, for the continuity of racial learning and racial worship we cancel these binding debts. Selfish desire of acquisition cannot co-exist with the desire of freedom from debt by doing righteous action to free ourselves from our debts. Another means is the doing of work as an act of carrying out the commandments of God. Another is doing it as a worship of God. (ईश्वाराजना) Another is surrendering the fruits of action to God to dispose them as best as He likes. These are the various aspects which will help us to realise Nishkama Karma (unselfish work) and lead us through it to the supreme bliss of God-love and God-realisation.

In the lower forms of creation hunger and sex are the predominant sources of action. In man, however, the love of the body expands into wider circles of love. The love of family, of society, of state, of humanity, of all living creatures, of the whole universe, of God—these are the sources alike of new duties and of new realisations. Duty is the discipline that sets free the love in us. Hence man has an ever increasing discipline of duty to attain the highest heights of freedom and love. Duty is the dictate of unselfishness. Love is the realisation of bliss in unity that dawns upon us as the result of unselfishness. Only then we can become God-like, because in the case of God His Duty is Love and His Love is Duty. It is only when our Karma Yoga blossoms in love of all and devotion to God that it attains its real consummation. The Bhagavatha declares well : "मैः स्वदुहितः दुष्टो विष्णवेन कथमुच्यते । नोत्पादयेद्यदिति नम एव हि केवलम् — If Dharma properly practised does not create a love of God and His gracious acts of love for all, it is a mere burden and nothing more.

The secret of work is work without attachment. योगः कर्मसु कोकिलम् (Yoga is the very dexterity of work) declared the lord in the *Bhagavad Gita*. Attachment is better than mere inertia, but non-attached work is the best of all. It is the true benediction of life. Success attends it as it is His work. The fulfilments of the river is in the ocean. In the same way the truly blessed work is that which leads to the greatest auspiciousness of the soul. That is the supreme test of the value of work. Does it lead us to love man and God or does it take us away from the love of man and of God ?

Equally needful are the purification and concentration of the mind. Each mind is in touch with the minds of all and with the cosmic mind. The impure and limited minds cannot meet and mingle owing to the obstructive layers of ignorance and desire. But the removal of the clouding layers results in cosmic realisation and bliss. There lies the secret of thought-transference, mesmerism, hypnotism, clairvoyance, clairaudience and other wonderful powers of the mind. It is concentration that is the real dynamo of mental power. The finer powers and energies always dominate the coarser in the values of the mind as in the value of matter. By Yoga we can attain such control over Prana that we can cure our maladies and the diseases of others. It is only when Yoga leads us to greater self-mastery and to services of others and to love of God that it fulfils its real place in the life divine.

The eternal secret about the inter-relation of past Karma and future perfection through present effort was revealed by the supreme sage and statesman Bhishma when he said that exertion is greater than destiny. This great teaching is the best refutation of the oft-asserted libel that Hindus are fatalists and have no inherent initiative and forcefulness of nature. It is the Hindus that know the elements of that tremendous complex called life and the secret by which life can be transformed into the super-life.

It is hence wrong to deify Karma into a destiny and to quail before it. What is created by action can be destroyed by counter-action. Karma is a law of our inner nature and can be modified by other laws. Gravitation pulls down ; but we can throw by our energy a stone above so as to counteract the force of gravitation. The stone no doubt comes back owing to the magnitude of the earth. But suppose the up-going stone is met

suddenly by a new-created sphere which comes swiftly near it, it gets attached to the latter and is free from the gravitational force of the earth. When we throw our love above and the sun of grace comes near, the Karmic force of desire on our soul cannot affect us in the least. We become attached to the higher and greater sphere of the life divine and can rise above the mere earthiness of desire into the heaven of love and service and renunciation.

The fact is that Karma is a complex phenomenon. We are the ancients of the world and have gone through many realms and experiences. Good and bad actions bear fruit; let them do so. Good and bad Vasanas (tendencies) manifest themselves. There is our battle ground. Intensify the good and curb the bad. There is our choice and there, our chance. Intense pain may come as the result of a past sin. We cannot avoid it, as what has been done has been done. But we can meet the pain in a new spirit and even turn it into a blessing. By seeing its genesis and fortifying my soul by faith and love and purity, I may even make it a means of greater faith and love and purity.

The world is our theatre. Our past tendencies and desires may induce us to take a mean and lowly part. But we can, God willing, intensify our good tendencies and desires and reject the suggestions of our bad tendencies and desires, and assume and act a noble and worthy part on the stage of life. When you find a sick man, one tendency tells you,—Why do you interfere? Let him suffer; and another tells you,—Help him and cure him. Curb the former and intensify the latter. The former is due to selfish desires in the past births; the latter is due to unselfish desires therein. These express the soul and those cloud and obscure it. Go to Him for strength and realise yourself. The Lord says in the Gita :—

इन्द्रियाणि परात्महृदि निवेश्यः परं मनः ॥

मनस्तु परा बुद्धिर्वा इन्द्रेः परतस्तु तः ॥

एवं इन्द्रेः परं बुद्ध्या संस्तव्यात्मानमात्मना ॥

अदि बहु महाबाहो कामरूपं दुरासदम् ॥

The senses are said to be superior (to the body); the mind is superior to the senses; the intellect is superior to the mind. and that is He (the Atman) Who is superior to the intellect. Thus knowing Him Who is the superior of the intellect, and restraining the self by the Self, destroy, O mighty-armed, that enemy, the unscizable foe, of desire."

Karma is thus a result and force. The direction and power of this force can be constantly modified and lessened. It can be minimised ; it can be deflected : it can be even stopped and reversed. It all depends on *our* present contribution and *His* grace. We must learn to see clearly the net-work and labyrinth of causes. If we do so, Karma ceases to be an *incubus* and becomes a *liberator*. The bondage of Karma and the freedom of God-love cannot flourish side by side and when the latter comes, the former must depart. It is by this means that Karma Yoga achieves for us the *Sammumbonum* of existence (i.e.) the realisation of Sachchidananda.

SELF-KNOWLEDGE

By Swami Atulananda

Once a man of renown, I think it was Dr. Johnson, when approaching death was visited by a priest. The good priest spoke to him about the life hereafter, and advised him to think of his future state. The doctor was slightly annoyed and replied, "Sir, one thing at the time. I am still in this world, when I have departed from here it will be time enough to think of the other world."

This answer has been applauded by many. Superficially the answer seems sound and not without wit. But looking at the question a little closer we find that the dying man was not very logical, that his understanding was not so profound as is often believed. It shows that the doctor shared the but too common belief that religion bears fruit in the future only, that it is a preparation for the life hereafter, that it means trouble now in the hope of future enjoyment.

The materialist argues that the future is uncertain, let us therefore enjoy the present. Why renounce the pleasures of this life for a dubious happiness hereafter ? There is no proof for immortality, your reason is based on faith, on belief in scriptures and the statements of so-called sages. We want substantial proof, demonstration. At the same time he himself is helpless when we ask him for proof to substantiate his unbelief. If he cannot accept our arguments in favour of immortality, neither can he provide us with proofs to the contrary, neither can he convince us that death is the end of our existence. The question remains

hanging in the balance. My arguments do not satisfy him, nor has he proof sufficient to satisfy his own unbelief. The best he can come to is agnosticism. He has no reason to believe, neither has he reason to disbelieve. To him it remains an open question. Therefore, he says, let us shelve the question, why waste time and energy in a vain attempt to solve what is insolvable.

To such men we have little to say. Immortality cannot be demonstrated to the senses. We cannot analyze it, we cannot weigh or measure it, we cannot subject it to sense perception. We cannot make mortal what is immortal. And that is what we would have to do, should we try to demonstrate immortality by scientific methods. Science can deal only with compounds, with what can be taken apart, broken up, transformed, manipulated. But that which is immortal is single, a unit. It cannot be split up, it cannot be made subject to change. It is altogether beyond the realm of physical science.

Science is limited and can deal only with limited subjects, with the laws of nature. But the Immortal is beyond limitations, beyond nature and laws. That is why religion and science are too often at war. For though *we* say that religion is the highest science, to the ordinary scientist this seems only juggling with words. He does not accept a science that surpasses his limited conceptions.

But men of spiritual realization say, scientific investigations are insufficient. They reveal knowledge of the external universe but not of the substance, the Real, behind the ever changing world. If you desire to know the Immortal you must steer in a different direction. Follow the path pointed out by the sages and you will come in contact with proof sufficient to change your unbelief into firm conviction, into absolute certainty.

This challenge is thrown out to the world. From the remotest past the voice continues to vibrate, "Neither by wealth nor progeny, nor by much labour is the Immortal revealed to man. It can be known by means of faith, devotion and meditation. He who sees the Immortal in this universe of death, the life eternal amidst all fleeting things, he who realizes the one who never changes, unto him belongs eternal peace, unto none else, none else."

It is all good and well to say, I live in the present, I don't worry about the future, but is not that like the school-boy who

cannot be made to take an interest in his studies? The boy wants to enjoy the present moment, to play and fritter away his time, heedless of what may become of him when he grows up. He sees no sense in learning that for which he has no immediate use. He does not understand that no labour is lost, that all these early efforts go to form his mind and character, to make him a useful, efficient man.

The doctor of whom we spoke did not deny that life may continue after the death of the body, but he considered all thought and labour given to that future existence so much waste of energy and time. He did not understand that soul improvement is a necessary factor in the process of evolution. Life hereafter is a continuation of the present life, under different conditions. What we are here, we will be there, the same personality, the same character, the same mind, the same state of soul development.

Ordinarily we do not remember our previous births, we have forgotten our past lives. But this does not mean that our efforts of one life do not bear fruit in the following birth. The scientist has forgotten most of what he had learned in childhood, the linguist does not remember all the rules of grammar. We do not remember the entire process through which we have become efficient in whatever it may be. But though now forgotten, these early efforts have become incorporated into our being, they form the basis on which our present knowledge rests.

It is thus also with the evolution of the soul. Life experience, soul experience, is gathered in every birth. The circumstances under which this experience was gained are forgotten, but the result remains. What the soul became in a previous life it is still when born again. What we are when we pass away from this world we will be when we are born again, that is, our inner make-up will be the same. We see how every child is different from every other child. One soul, even at birth is different from every other soul, because we have all learned different lessons, we have all profitted in different degrees by the opportunities offered in previous births.

Each life lived is but a chapter in the book of Life. If we have grasped the full meaning of that chapter we need not turn to it again, we take up a new chapter. But if we have been negligent and turned over the pages without absorbing what

they have to teach we shall have to be born again and again till we have learned our lesson.

Religion shows us the means how to become alert, intelligent, industrious students of life. It shows us how to finish our course with expediency. It teaches us to study life in all its phases. What am I? What is this 'I' that directs the mind and senses? What is that inner being in me, my very life centre?

"The body is like a pillow case," said Sri Ramakrishna. Within the body dwells the real man. Subtler than the body is the mind. But there is a still subtler, the One who directs the mind. The mind is changeable, but the Director of the mind changes not. He is the same in pleasure and pain, in failure and success, in childhood, youth and old age. Who is this Actor, acting through the body and mind? Our personality is a disguise, it hides the real Actor.

Religion reveals to us the real actor, the eternal, unchangeable spark, the Life, the soul of man, the real I. It reveals ourselves to ourselves. It is the search for That in our being which is unseen but seeing, as the Upanishads put it. "That which is not heard but hearing, unperceived but perceiving, unknown but knowing. He is the only hearer, the only perceiver, the only knower. He is thy real self, the Ruler within, the Immortal. Everything else is delusion and fraught with evil."

Religion then is not simply a question concerning life hereafter. It is a question of the present as well, of all life, present and future.

Words are often confusing, they often hide the true meaning of what we wish to express. How much clearer would it be to many if for the word religion we substituted the term self-knowledge, for the word God, the term Inner-self. And why make so much of the life hereafter instead of considering Life as a whole, past, present and future?

We want to know ourselves, what we really are. When I say that we want to know God, we get confused, because we do not realize that God is but another name for the eternal I in us. The soul of man which is the soul of every being, is the one and only God. "there is" all else is a fleeting manifestation. The real "I" and the real you, and the real in every form of manifestation is one and the same God. We are like the waves on an

ocean of Existence, which is called God. He pervades the entire universe. He is your soul, my soul, the soul of saint and brute. He is the eternal spark of consciousness, the eternal life in all that lives. It is said in the Upanishad, "Thou art the bee hovering over the flower, Thou art the green parrot in the forest, Thou art the thundercloud, Thou art the ocean. Thou art without beginning, and infinite. From Thee the worlds have sprung."

Here lies our kinship. On the surface we are all different. In manifestation we differ, but in spirit, in Reality, we are One. It is God, the real I, Who speaks and acts through you, through me, through all creation. There is but one soul, one real I, one self. So the ancient Rishi sang, "Thou art the woman, thou art the man, thou art the boy and the girl, and the old man trembling on his staff. Thou art all in all in the universe." And again, "Through every mouth He eats, through every hand He works. Concealed in all beings dwells the Atman as butter in milk. Find Him, Oh man, churn the mind that the spirit may float uppermost in your consciousness. Seeing the Atman abiding in all beings, and all beings in the Atman, one reaches the state of Bliss."

To know Him, is the object of religion; to know Him here and now. Knowing Him now, we shall know Him through all eternity.

Religion does not mean preparing for one-self a nice place in Heaven; it is the sincere search after Truth, the truth of our own being. He who knows himself rises beyond all heavens. He has become one with that eternal Existence in which heavens and earth and all spheres, good and bad, float as bubbles on an ocean. "Even in this life," says the Gita, "they have conquered heaven, whose minds are firmly fixed on the Supreme. Yea, such are said to live in God."

This external life is but a shadow compared to our true existence. Our real self is sporting in the guise of our personality. But not until we tear off the mask shall we be able to see the Atman, our real self. It is not easy to do this. We have been wearing the disguise so long, we have so firmly fastened it on to the soul. Our ego is the mask. We must tear it asunder. Then the glory of the real self will shine, "Even as the moon emerging from the eclipse shines in her own glory." "The serpent of ego," says Sri Sankaracharya, "hides the jewel of Bliss,

the Atman. This serpent must be destroyed before we can take possession of that jewel."

There are many ways to kill the serpent. These ways are the different religious paths. "The way is long and weary, difficult to tread, like walking on the sharp edge of a razor; yet despair not. Arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached." We may follow the path of action, or of devotion, or of self-analysis, it matters not, for all paths lead to the same Truth. "Blessed are they whose hearts are set on that Supreme Knowledge. The rest welter in a world of confusion."

Sometimes it is objected that if God is my own real self, then there is no room for prayer and worship. I cannot pray to, or worship myself! But is it really so? Is not all religion a struggle within myself? Is it not a constant appeal to the good, the holy, the divine in ourselves? Is it not a constant fight against our lower nature? And is not this appeal equal to prayer? Certainly. We may cry from the bottom of our hearts,—Oh, Thou divine Self within, manifest Thyself, assert Thyself, subdue my lower nature, lift my consciousness unto Thy presence, reveal Thyself to me!

This method need not appeal to every one. Some may prefer to worship God in some external form. And why not? He who is the self in man is also the self in higher and lower manifestations. We may adore Him in the saints, in God-men, in Avatars like Buddha or Jesus. He is the self in all. He is omnipresent. He is in the idol, in stone and wood. All worship is justified if it is sincere. He is the merciful One, the same to all, a Father, a Mother, a Friend. He hears the voice of His devotees. "He answers our prayers, He hears our supplications."

Another question may arise. How can God reveal Himself to us? How can He come to us? He is omnipresent, how can he come or go? He is my very Being, the nearest of the near.

But, coming, here does not mean moving in space. Revealing, does not mean changing His form, or appearance. When my eyes are closed, I don't see the light. I open my eyes and I see the light. Light came, but it did not move or change. To the blind the world of phenomena seems far distant, though near at hand. A little film covering the eyes is all that separates him from the visible universe. When the film is removed, light has

come, the world has appeared, the Universe stands revealed. But the change was not in anything external, it was in himself, in the blind man.

So it is with God. He never comes or goes. It is our vision of Him that is either clear or obstructed. It is our spiritual eye that is either opened or closed. What is in our consciousness we see, we perceive, the rest lies in obscurity. When we are not conscious of God He seems far away, we call for Him, we do not realize His eternal presence.

On a hazy day we do not see the glorious ranges of snow-covered mountains. A stranger to the hill country cannot even imagine that there are snow peaks so near. Suddenly the haze lifts and a sight of unspeakable grandeur reveals itself. Then we call out, "The mountains have come!" But what happened? The obstruction was removed, and the unseen stood self revealed. A delirious man calls for his wife to come to him. The wife is seated at his bedside, holding his hand, bathing his burning brow. But the patient sees her not, he thinks her far away, he is not conscious of her presence. The fever comes down, normal consciousness is restored, and the man sees his wife. He rejoices, and calls out, "O, you have come at last, where have you been so long?"

And thus it is with God. He is always near. But our consciousness is taken up with other things, and we do not see Him. Though so near, still He seems so far away. When the cloud of ignorance and self delusion is lifted, then we become conscious of His presence. As haze of worldly thoughts becomes thinner, we become conscious of Him, little by little, till the haze has evaporated and we see Him in all His glory, enthroned in our own hearts.

How is this brought about? The sincere heart will find the way. "Search and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you." Knock at the door of your own heart, for there the spirit resides. Enter within your own being, brush aside the tumultuous thoughts of your mind, meditate and pray, and within yourself you will find the abode of God, the haven of peace. We do not have to go here or there; neither does He descend from some throne above the clouds. Heaven, and the God of heaven are within you.

Through devotion, meditation, prayer, we may enter into the great silence of our own being. By shutting out the light of the external world and all its clammering demands and ever-changing unrealities, we come upon the Light within, the self-luminous Soul, the Life eternal which is beyond all darkness, all despair. "When with that Light the mind is overpowered, then does it see no more dreams," says the Upanishad. "Then Bliss is experienced. Who, verily, knows the unfading One, in Whom the whole universe is nestled, he into all-knowing enters." "Therefore," says another Upanishad, "worship the Self alone, for He is dearer than son, or wealth, or power. And worshipping Him, the object of your love will never perish."

Let us try to know the self, let us make this the main object of our lives. Says Yajnavalkya, "He who reaches that state which lies beyond hunger and thirst, beyond passion and sorrow and death, he knows the Atman and he gives up all other desires, even the desire for the enjoyments of different heavens. He is the true Yogi. Renouncing all desires, stand in thy real strength, know thy self."

What we strongly desire we certainly shall attain. Let us then long for that great Treasure Which once we possess It can never again be taken from us.

This our present existence is but a fleeting dream. It seems so real to us now. All dreams seem real while they last. But those who have awakened from their sleep have realized the difference between this passing life and man's eternal existence.

That awakening comes after long search and religious practice. Some practices help to correct bad, obstinate habits of thought and deed. But the higher practices open up our spiritual vision. The highest vision is to see God as our real Self, and Him in everything. That vision comes only to those who have become perfectly pure in mind. And purity of mind the scriptures tell us comes through practice. "Through renunciation of all passions and worldly desires," says Sri Ramakrishna. The Vedanta has laid down the lines of progress and discipline. It leads the aspirant step by step to the highest realization. And it tells us that the door to the Highest opens only to the brave, the persevering, the most sincere. So long as we shrink

from discipline we cannot enter through the gate of knowledge. Truthfulness, purity, love for all beings, and meditation, these are the keys that unlock the gate which admits us to higher spiritual truths. The sages practised these virtues.

Sri Ramakrishna said, "To purify the mind it is necessary now and then to go into solitude, to cut one-self off from one's every day surroundings. As the pearl-oyster after catching a rain drop dives down to the bottom of the sea to develop it into a beautiful pearl, so the aspirant must catch hold of Truth, and then retire into solitude to make that Truth a living reality to himself." In ordinary social life there is a constant clash and friction of ideas and forces which disturb the serenity of the mind. Therefore solitude is recommended.

The attainment of spirituality requires exertion and sacrifice. But once the goal is reached, we are told, there is no more danger. Then we may mix again with others. Then we will be strong enough to brave the current of life, we will be able to steer free from pitfalls and dangers. Then our lives will be only for the good of others.

God-men like Christ and Buddha and Sri Ramakrishna, men of realization, selfless, were able to lift the burden off others. These are the highest type of men, and the greatest workers. But before they undertook to help others they prepared themselves for the task. In solitude they struggled till Truth was realized. Then they returned to society like avalanches of spiritual power. And their work was immortal, for all eternity. Bereft of all personal motives, immovably fixed in the realization of their identity with all creation, they served humanity every moment of their lives. These God-men have shown us the way. May it be our attempt to walk in their footsteps. "Let the worldly-wise praise or blame, let the goddess of fortune smile or frown, let death come this moment or after many years, he alone will attain to self-knowledge who swerves not from the path of Truth."

LIFE SKETCH OF RAMDAS.

THE PATRIOT SAINT OF MAHARASHTRA

By Swami Gunatilananda

It was only recently that the tercentenary birthday of Shivaji the founder of the Maharashtra Empire was celebrated with great fervour and enthusiasm right throughout India. The fact that this year it was made an All-India celebration is proof positive of the national awakening that augurs well for the future of India. Shivaji was an invincible hero, a first class statesman, an adept in the art of diplomacy and withal, a great devotee who combined in him the highest chivalry and a thorough grasp of the goal of life. He had great talents, possessed supreme power and evinced remarkable bravery—qualities which were fostered, nourished and kept ablaze by Ramdas to whom he owed not a little. It is proposed to give below a brief history of the life of Ramdas who was both the spiritual and political Guru of Shivaji.

A study of the world's history incontestably demonstrates the existence of the mysterious law of Nature that where there is a demand there is always also the supply. This law holds good not only in the realm of matter but also in the spiritual world. We see great personalities appearing on this globe from time to time to meet a special need, to fulfil a certain mission, to deliver a certain Divine message or to impart an impetus to the country, nation or community in which they are born. They come with Divine power and they do not fail to get, as they march on in their lives, suitable persons to help them in carrying out their special work in this world. They are equipped, so to say, with just the qualities of head and heart as will ensure the fruition of their mission. Through self-control, strict discipline and severe austerities they prepare themselves, consciously or unconsciously for the huge task that Providence has meant them. Witness the lives of Buddha, Christ, Mahommed, Chaitanya and Sri Ramakrishna. To the galaxy of these saints belongs Samarth (able) Ramdas, the hero of our narrative. To form an adequate idea of the value of the life of Ramdas and of the part he played in the formation and rise of Maharashtra, a knowledge of the then political situation of Maharashtra is absolutely necessary. During the reign of the Moghul Emperors Shahjehan

and Aurangazeb, Hinduism was in danger of being obliterated from India. Hindus were being trodden down by the fanatic Mahomedans who were bent on converting them to Mahomedanism by all means in their power. No method was too low for them. They spared no pains—allurement, threat, force were being freely used to proselytise the Hindu. Some embraced Islam for fear of losing their property, others for preserving the chastity of their wives while others for acquiring the good will of the Emperor and through it enormous riches. Hindus were thus helpless and their condition was simply deplorable. In fact the Hindu Society was in danger of getting wrecked for want of a bold leader who could steer clear of all danger. Just at this juncture there arose on the horizon of Maharashtra Ramdas shining in Divine Light.

Samartha Ramdas was born of Suryaji Pant Thosar who was a Kulkarni of the village called Jambagon. Suryaji Pant Thosar was a Devastha Brahmin of Aswalayam Shakha and was neither rich nor poor. He was an ardent worshipper of Suryanarayan. He had a wife by name Ranu Bhai who was known for her chastity, modesty, love and kindness. Of such a pair was born Ramdas as their second son, the first being Gangadhar known afterwards as Sresta. This second son was born in the year 1608 on the auspicious day of Sri Rama Navami on which Sri Rama, the well known incarnation of Vishnu, was born. The parents christened him as Narayan. While a boy he was shrewd active, energetic and playful. He was fond of climbing trees, jumping into rivers and swimming. In due time he was put in school and there he was known for his diligence. As was the custom in those days he was taught Sanskrit just sufficient to know all about daily rites,—Sandhya, Deva-Puja, Agni-Karya,—the study of the Vedas being left to his option. He was also taught to write Modi characters which were in use then. In his fifth year the Upanayana (thread-wearing) ceremony was performed and thence forwards he observed the routine duties of a Brahman Batu. The object of education in those days was, more than the acquisition of material knowledge, to ground the beginners in religious ideals, in spirituality and to make gods of men. He had a great aptitude for learning so much so that before he attained his twelfth year he had acquired a good knowledge of the Upanishads, the Gita, Bhagawat and Ramayan. And there arose in him a craving for spiritual knowledge. During this period his elder brother, Sresta, used to

give initiation to many people who went to him. This all the more kindled Ramdas's thirst for the Truth and though but eight years old he approached his brother and expressed his desire to be initiated. The elder brother wanted him to wait till he grew a little older, at which he got greatly vexed, secretly left the house and went into the temple dedicated to Maruti (Hanuman the servant of Rama) and stayed there long without the knowledge of his brother or mother, immersed in prayer. Maruti took pity on him and appearing before him asked him what he wanted. The young Narayan without in the least getting nervous boldly replied, "I want nothing but Anuraga" meaning thereby initiation. Maruti thereupon meditated for sometime and invoked Sri Rama to appear before the boy and confer on him the desired boon. The boy was thus blessed with a vision of Sri Rama with Sita and Lakshman. Before the vision disappeared the boy was christened Ramdas—the name by which Narayan was ever afterwards known—and Sri Rama is said to have enjoined on him the duty of undertaking the revival of Hindu religion and of securing solace and comfort to weeping hearts—a task in which he was promised help from a king who would be born in a Maharashtra family living by the side of the river Krishna. Ramdas quietly returned home and was pursuing his studies until his 12th year when he lost his father.

Then came the turning point in his life. The widowed mother and his affectionate brother who became his guardians soon arranged for his marriage. Many relations and friends were invited and the marriage ceremony was going on in full swing. Preliminary ceremonies and rites being over, the Brahmins who presided at the marriage held the screen between the bride and the bridegroom according to the custom and began to chant *Mangalashtaka Mantra* repeating at the end twice सुखदुःखं सुममंगलं सदापान the meaning of which is "This is the auspicious moment (in your life) be on your alert or keep awake." The poet Moropant has very beautifully said "In all places, Brahmins at the auspicious time of marriage have said "be awake" but it was given only to Ramdas to grasp the inner meaning of it—my salutations unto him." To a minute observer and deep thinker Hindu Scriptures appeal in one way and to the dull in another way. While to the one the Hindu Scriptures appear to lay down mere conventionalities which have to be mechanically and formally observed, to the other they give a note of warning hearing which the goal of life becomes easily attainable. The

mind of Ramdas, not tainted by worldly thoughts and desires, free from "Kanchana and Kamini" was pure as crystal and at once reflected in lurid colours the meaning hidden in or intended to be conveyed by the Mantra referred to above. When he heard the words "be on your alert or keep awake" uttered twice his keen and untrammelled intellect at once pointed out to him the danger he would run if he neglected to listen to the warning and exhorted him to decide at once the course he should take. And Ramdas as if by instinct got up and boldly ran out of the house bestowing not even the least thought on how his guardians would feel or how the assembled guests would feel insulted.

Our young Bramacharin with burning Vairagya in his heart straightway went to Panchavati in Nasik and there selected a place called Takli where he spent twelve complete years in severe penance, meditation and prayers. Tradition has it that he used to stand in the waters of the Godaveri for hours and hours together, fully engrossed in making²japam and that his concentration was so great that he was unmindful of the fish bites on the lower part of his body. It is rather unfortunate that no detailed account of his Sadhanas has been preserved; suffice it to say that many and varied should have been the Sadhanas he practised as is evidenced by the wonderful Siddhis (powers) he possessed and the high spirituality he attained.

After finishing the Sadhanas in which he was strenuously engaged for twelve long years and during which he led a life of seclusion in forest, he took to Parivrajaka life (life of wandering) and travelled all over India from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin mingling with people of all grades and circumstances associating with mendicants of all denominations and moving with itinerant monks whose rule of life is not to stay in any place for more than three days. During this period of his life he initiated many thirsting souls and established temples in various places for the worship of Sri Rama, his Ishtam (chosen deity). In the temples he established he made all the necessary arrangements for the daily Pujah and appointed one of his own disciples to be in charge of each. As was expected of the monks of his order he visited the four great places of pilgrimage—the Chaturdhama—the Badri-Kedar in the Himalayas, the Sethu-Bandha Rameswar in the South, Jagannath Puri in the East and Dwarka in the West. In this Parivrajaka life besides various other places of pilgrimage he is

said to have visited also Ceylon finally returning to Nasik. And all his possessions these twelve years were a pair of wooden sandals, a rosary in his hand, another round his neck, and a Yogadanda (a monk's stick) in the hollow of which he carried writing materials of his work the *Das Bodha*. And all his clothing was a long conical cap upon his matted locks and a Gerua (ochre) coloured cloth round his loins.

On his return from pilgrimage, he wished to see his mother and brother. So he went to his native place Jambagon. Thus after having lived a wandering ascetic's life for twelve years he entered his native village and went to the temple of Maruti first where he got his initiation and worshipped the deity who had showed him the Light and guided him in all his wanderings. Then he went to his house and entered it loudly uttering the words "Jai, Jai Raghuvir Samarth"—words which he used to utter whenever he went for alms. His mother hearing these words directed her daughter-in-law to give alms. Sresta's wife accordingly came out with alms at which Ramdas said "I am not come here as a mendicant to take alms." From the not unfamiliar voice the mother took him to be her son and asked, "Who is it? Is it Narayan, my child?" Up came the reply "Yes mother. It is I". So saying he prostrated at her feet touching them with his head. What joy resulted from this meeting between son and mother after the lapse of nearly twenty-four years can better be imagined than expressed. The old mother who had lost her eyesight by constant weeping for the son who had run away caught hold of him with her hands and taking him by her side constantly passed her hand over his body. After a little time the mother told her son "Naroba, (that is the name by which she used to call him) you have grown big! How I long to see you with my physical eyes! But alas! how to get the sight?" This moved the heart of Ramdas and he invoked his diety Rama and fervently prayed to him to restore his mother her eye-sight. And then he gently touched her eyes with his fingers. At once, by the grace of the Lord, she got her vision back, and unbounded was the joy of the mother to see her son. And she exclaimed "What Naroba! All this witchcraft have you learnt with the help of some ghosts. Oh! Tell me the name of the ghost that restored my eyesight." Then on the very spot Ramdas composed a song which says, "Oh mother! that ghost is none other than the resident of Vaikuntha (abode of God) who came to Ayodhya to be born as the son of Kausalya for the purpose of exterminating

Ravana and Kumbhakarna" and so on. Listening to this the mother became ecstatic and embraced her son again and again. His brother who was inside engaged in worship hearing all this, came out and embraced Ramdas with a brother's joy. After spending a few days in the company of his old mother and brother, he took leave of them saying that the deity in the temple on the side of the Krishna had imposed on him a duty which required his presence elsewhere. At this time he was thirty-six years old, the first twelve years of his life having been spent at home, the second twelve years in Panchawati in Tapasya and the next twelve years in Parivrajaka life. This brings the Sadhana period of his life to a close and we shall hereafter see him launching in right earnest on his life's mission—the building up of the Maharashtra nation on a religious basis.

EDITORIAL NOTES

The Question of Indian National Unity

"Being of one mind is the secret of society. And the more you go on fighting and quarrelling about all trivialities such as Dravidian and Aryan and the question of Brahmanas and non-Brahmanas and all that, the further you are off from that accumulation of energy and power which is going to make the future India. For mark you, the future depends entirely upon that. This is the secret—accumulation of will power, co-ordination, bringing all, as it were, into one focus." These memorable words uttered more than three decades ago by the great patriot-Saint of Modern India, standing on the very soil of Madras, we Indians should bear in mind to-day more than ever. Distinctions and differences there are in all countries. And India is no exception to the rule. But what is most unfortunate in the India of to-day is that to the old factors of disunion, there have been added new ones introduced by Western civilisation, and all these are tending to divide the Indian people into countless factions positively imperilling the welfare of the country. The old differences between the so-called Aryan and non-Aryan, Brahmanas and non-Brahmanas, high-caste and out-caste, Hindus and Mohammedans are still there, nay are being accentuated at many places. Besides these, there have come into being the new

social divisions of capital and labour, and also political parties of various types, and all these are making confusion worse confounded by their quarrels and dissensions. No wonder then that the unsympathetic critic would look upon India as a land of chaos. But this is certainly not the correct view. The true seer sees in the present disturbed state of the country only the signs of a new awakening leading the Indian people to a greater unity and co-ordination than what existed in the past. Lovers and well-wishers of the country should not, therefore, feel depressed in any way. They should, on the other hand, put forth organised efforts to achieve the ideal of Indian national unity more enthusiastically than ever.

The Immensity of the Task

The task of bringing about the unity of the Indian people is not an easy one. Neither is it such an impossibility as is supposed by many. And the hope of the future lies in the fact that in the midst of the vigorous propaganda and counter propaganda carried on in the country by the so-called religious and political zealots, the vast mass of the Indian people are as yet unaffected by the evil of communalism. Even those who have come under its sway are in the main giving expression to a new consciousness that, instead of being suppressed, should be given a higher turn and direction. The problem of Indian national unity is thus more constructive than destructive. And it has got the two fold aspects, communal as well as national. There must be realised the solidarity of the diverse sections of each community, and along with it, the foundations of national unity should also be laid, on the love and goodwill of the members of all communities. There is really no clash between the communal and national well-being. The former finds its fulfilment in the latter. It is the failure to recognise this fact that is mostly responsible for the conflict between our communal and national movements, that is proving to be greatly detrimental not only to the best interest of the country but also to that of the communities themselves. But this clash need not continue any longer. For the sake of our national regeneration it is essential on our part to look upon the problem of unity with a wider vision. The different communities are inseparable parts of the one indivisible Indian nation. The primary interest of any community should not, therefore, be ruthlessly sacrificed in the name of the nation. Neither should national welfare be thoughtlessly imperilled for the sake a particular community

whatever it may be. Let us make the unity of the community a stepping stone to the unity of the entire Indian people. And in strengthening the weaker members of the social organism let us also look to the well-being of the collective body of which they are the component parts.

Aryan and Non-Aryan

Of all the communities in India, the Hindu society is unfortunately the most disunited. It consists of two thirds of India's three hundred millions, and as such its solidarity is an indispensable condition of the Indian national unity. But unfortunately various causes divide the Hindus to-day. Besides those that are due to the misapplication of the highest ideals of the Hindu religion, there are also some wrong theories propounded mostly by the so-called orientlists of the West, that are doing incalculable harm to Hindu society. The first of these is that the Aryans were a race of outlanders who invaded India, occupied the country by force of arms, and imposed their Government and culture on the aborigines supposed to include the ancestors of those who call themselves Dravidas and Adi-Dravidas in Southern India. But the earliest of the Vedic scriptures speak of a different tale. India was the motherland of the Aryans and Dravidians, nay of all the other races that lived and thrived on the soil from time immemorial. New races and tribes also came,—some as invaders and some as settlers, but almost all of them became fused beyond recognition into the mighty body of Hindu society. It is futile to try to divide this synthetic people with the help of a theory that cannot stand the test of truth. In the words of Swami Vivekananda, "We are, inspite of our various castes, and in spite of the modern customs of marriage restricted within the sub-divisions of a caste (though this is not universal), a mixed race in every sense of the word. Whatever may be the import of the philological terms "Aryan" and "Tamilian," even taking for granted that both these grand sub-divisions of Indian humanity came from outside the Western frontier, the dividing line had been, from the most ancient times, one of language and not of blood. "Such words as Aryans and Dravidians, are only of philological import, the so-called craniological differentiation finding no solid ground to work upon."

Hinduism—a Synthetic Religion

Another "monstrous lie" believed in by many an unwary Hindu is that Hinduism is nothing but Brahminism, a religion that originated from Brahmins alone. Nothing can be further

from the truth. Hinduism represent the eternal religion revealed to the Rishis or "seers of truth"—to the prophets, saints and sages who were by no means the monopoly of any particular caste or class. Among the Upanishadic teachers there were Kshatriya kings—"non-Brahmin's in South India phraseology—who gave instructions even to Brahmin students. To this caste also belonged Rama and Krishna—the greatest of the incarnations of God—according to the Hindus of all sects and creeds. The glory of Hinduism has been upheld and proclaimed by an unbroken succession of saints and sages who sprang up from not only Brahmin and other high castes but also from the so-called untouchable classes. Modern Hinduism is not the religion of the Upanishads merely. It has been enriched by the religious ideas contained in the vast mass of Puranic scriptures as well as in the provincial and vernacular literature, ancient, medieval and modern. It is the synthesis of the various streams of culture, that have arisen and met on the soil of India. Just as the original Hindu society, with culture as its central theme, has assumed vast proportions through the assimilation of new elements, so has its religion, Hinduism, grown into a mighty cultural stream by the rise and inclusion of various systems of religious thought professed by innumerable sects and creeds free to follow their own laws of growth and to lead man step by step to the pinnacle of the highest spiritual glory. Hinduism is the great heritage left to us by the Vedic Rishis, the Upanishadic seers, the Puranic teachers, the Shaivite and Vaishnavite saints and philosophers of South India, and also by the Mahratha, Bengalee and North Indian saints and reformers. These are the makers of modern Hinduism; and they flourished in all ages, lived in different provinces, spoke diverse languages, and were born in communities both high-caste and out-caste. Many of the Puranic sages were even of questionable parentage, but they rose to the high eminence they enjoyed in Hinduism owing to their unique spiritual powers. It is therefore preposterous to brand as Brahminism a religion that is in every sense of the term the product of the religious genius of the entire Hindu community, consisting of Brahmins and non-Brahmins alike, of different racial stocks Aryan, Dravidian, Negrito-Kolarian, Mongolians and others.

The Curse of Untouchability

"No religion on earth," observes Swami Vivekananda with a sorrowful heart,—"preaches the dignity of humanity in such a

lofty strain as Hinduism, and no religion on earth treads upon the necks of the poor and the low in such a fashion as Hinduism." As the Swami further observes, the Hindu religion is not at fault. The principles of equality are there. But the Pharisees and Sadducees in Hinduism, instead of applying the ideals to their everyday life have invented inhuman laws and restrictions that have split Hindu society as it were into the two groups—the "touchable" and the "untouchable." The religion of the so-called orthodox is inseparable from "Don't touchism", and unfortunately it exists in more virulent form, in the South than in the North where, however, the Hindu-Moslem tension has become very acute. The question of Aryan and Dravidian, Brahmin and non-Brahmin are peculiar to Southern India. And it is the subtle Southern brain again that has also discovered pollution by sight and approach besides pollution by touch prevailing more or less in all parts of the country. The sufferings of the so-called "untouchables" are the greatest in the land of the philosophers Sankara, Ramanuja, and Madhva, where heart has not been allowed to grow as much as the brain. Whatever it is, the depressed classes are Hindus by faith, drawing inspiration from the Hindu scriptures in some form or other. And they have contributed their mite to the Hindu religion by giving birth to saints and teachers—Nanda, Tiruppan, Chokamela, Ravi Das and others—who have intensified Hindu spiritual life and are honoured even by the orthodox devotees of to-day. As such the out-caste communities form part and parcel of the mighty Hindu society, and their elevation should form an essential part of the general Hindu revival the signs of which are manifest all over the country.

The Problem of the Hindu Masses

The uplift of the untouchable is one aspect of the larger question of the elevation of the Indian masses. But unfortunately there exists at present a great gulf between the classes and the masses almost as wide as that between the high-caste and the out-caste. The narrow mentality that dominates the minds of the so-called educated communities concerns itself with the welfare of the upper classes alone. The great truth that the nation lives in the cottage and that its salvation depends on the well-being of the masses is recognised by a few. At times the upper classes interest themselves in the people, but this mostly with a view to exploit them for the benefit of their political

parties. Nothing can be more suicidal to the good of the Indian nation than this. It is high time for the national workers to understand that the main problem of India lies in the cottage and in the village—the home of the nation. And the great task before them is to help the masses, to stand on their own legs economically, and solve the momentous problems that face them and the country. Besides this, another important work is to raise the cultural level of the people for the purpose of breaking down the barrier between the classes and the masses and establishing a greater solidarity between the two. Similar attempts were made from time to time by the reformers of the past. But the result could not be made permanent. It is because that Sanskrit learning and culture was not spread among the masses. However, we should now put sufficient stress on this important aspect of mass education of which religion should form an integral part. Speaking on this important problem observes Swami Vivekananda with a deep insight—"keep the motto before you—Elevation of the masses without injuring their religion." "Teach the masses in the Vernacular, give them ideas; they will get information; but something more is necessary; give them culture. Until you give them that, there can be no permanence in the raised condition of the masses. There will be another caste created, having the advantage of Sanskrit language, which will quickly get above the rest and rule them all the same. The only safety, I tell you men who belong to the lower castes, the only way to raise your condition is to study Sanskrit. The only way to bring about a levelling of caste is to appropriate the culture, the education which is the strength of the higher castes. That done, you have done what you want."

Hindu-Moslem Unity

Hindu-Moslem differences stand as a great stumbling block in the way of Indian national unity. They have become more tense in the North than in the South; but they exist in some form or other all over the country. As such some proper basis should be found for their satisfactory settlement. The movement for organisation and conversion undertaken by the Hindus have given rise to a great animosity in the minds of the Mussalman propagandists who previously enjoyed a monopoly of conversion at the expense of the disorganised Hindu community. But Moslem leaders should clamour for special privileges no longer, but be ready to concede to others the rights they want for them-

selves. If both the Hindus and Mussalmans would try to preach their religions and gain converts by all legitimate means, many of the evils and abuses arising out of conversion and re-conversion would cease to arise at all. The killing of cows by Mussalmans and the playing of music before mosques by Hindus are the other two points of communal dissensions that are creating great troubles in the country. These so-called religious strifes are due not so much to religious faith as to communal rights. And the surest means of removing their root cause is not merely to pass resolutions in conferences, but also to promote inter-communal understanding by all practical means. Vigorous educative propaganda should be undertaken to counteract the evil influences of the fanatical preachers, whether Hindu or Mussalman, and to create at the same time in the minds of all a respect for the religion, life and property of others. It is a pity that Moslem preachers and masses are more fanatical and violent than their Hindu brethren. The many riots and assassinations that have taken place in recent times point clearly to this. Instead of being an object of pride it is a positive disgrace to Islam and Mussalman leaders should try to remove this slur by all means in their power. Islam entered India as the invaders' religion, and as such it has not yet been able to give up the spirit of militarism and aggression. Let it not any longer remain a foreign religion imbued with exclusive ideas of the Semites. Let it instead strike deep root in the soil of India and breathe the spirit of toleration and universalism that pervades her atmosphere. Our Mussalman brethren should also love their motherland as much as the Hindus, and take a greater interest in the good of their own countrymen than in that of their co-religionists abroad. It is unfortunate that many of them are, to quote the words of a sensible Mussalman writer, "callously indifferent to the great events at home," but evince the "wildest and most unnatural" concern with less momentous events in foreign lands inhabited by people who "happen to call themselves Mussalmans." At a time when millions of their co-religionists and countrymen were suffering greatly from exposure and starvation, Indian Mussalmans were busy in sending millions of rupees to support wars in distant lands that expressed its gratitude towards their Indian supporters by banishing the Khalifa and striking at the very roots of the ill-fated Khilafat movement itself. Mohammedans in India should be imbued with an intensive form of patriotism and also love the culture of

the land that has been the motherland of the forefathers of the vast majority of them. The Hindus also should look upon their Mohammedan brethren not as aliens but as children of India and inheritors of her culture. If both the communities would recognise their inner bond, the realisation of Hindu-Moslem unity will follow as a matter of course.

Strengthening of the Bonds of Unity

The main solution to the problem of the unity of a deeply religious people lies greatly in the unity of religions. Causes of differences exist side by side with points of harmony, and the latter should be emphasised more than the former. Political, economic and social movements there must be. But all these should proceed in harmony with the genius of the Indian people. "Every improvement in India," observes Swami Vivekananda, "requires first of all an upheaval in religion. Before flooding the land with socialistic or political ideas first deluge the land with spiritual ideas . . . The first plank in the making of a future India, is the unification of religion." Whether we are Hindus or Mussalmans, Christians or Buddhists, all of us must claim our common heritage of spiritual ideas, and work for our common good with united hearts beating to the same spiritual tune. It is a happy sign of the times that this ideal of religious unity is being more and more recognised by thoughtful men of all religions in India. A great Moslem leader recently gave expression to it when he said—"I have an invincible faith in the essential harmony of spiritual ideals that are at the core of the world's religions—Hinduism, Christianity and Islam." What we want everywhere is a truly religious spirit. Instead of an unprogressive and fanatical religion we should have a dynamic and creative religion that will break down the encrustations of prejudices and superstitions passing by the name of religion, awaken in us the true spiritual sense that would take note of the essential truths common to all religions, and arouse in ourselves an intense religious fervour that would transform itself into national service in all fields of life, political and economic, aesthetic and literary, social and spiritual. Besides the religious bond, there are other factors of union,—the love of motherland, devotion to common ideals, and the awakening of a new consciousness of nationalism that is stirring the very depths of Indian life at present. Rightly does Sister Nivedita observe in her inimitable words about the unity of the Indian people—"With all alike, love of home, pride of race, idealism of woman, is a

passion. With everyone, devotion to India as India finds some characteristic expression. To the Hindu of all provinces, his motherland is the seat of holiness, the chosen home of righteousness, the land of seven sacred rivers, "the place to which sooner or later must come all souls in the quest of God." To the son of Islam, her earth is the dust of his saints. She is the seal upon his greatest memories. Her villages are his home. In her future lies his hope. In both, the nationalising consciousness is fresh and unexhausted. That which Asoka was, seated, two hundred and fifty years before Christ, on the great throne of Pataliputra, —What Akbar was, at Delhi, eighteen centuries later,—that, in the sense of national responsibility, every Indian man must become to-morrow. For this is the age, not of thrones, but of democracies; not of empires, but of nationalities; and the India that faces the sunrise of nations, is young and strong."

NOTES AND COMMENTS

GREATER INDIA

It is now a well recognised fact that the ancient Hindu civilization did not confine its activities to the natural boundaries of the mother country as was for a long time wrongly held by many Western scholars, but allowed itself to flow into far off lands. It has been rightly said that the History of 'Ancient India was in its cultural side the history of the expansion of Hindu organisation and Hindu socio-ethical and philosophical ideals from the Punjab and the upper Gange valley. The sea could not bar its expansion eastwards. It crossed the seas to Suvarnabhumi (Burma) to Dwaravati (Siam) to Champa (Cochin China) to Kataha (Malaya) to Srivijaya (Sumatra) to Yavadvipa (Java) to Barhina (Borneo) to Bali and as some would have it went further till it touched the shores of the Americas. "The Vedic Rishis and the Buddhist patriarchs" a writer tells us however aspired to broadcast the products of their culture across the 'seven seas' and to share their *Amrita* or *triratna* with the humblest savage and lowly barbarian. The 'Dasyus' and the 'Danavas' who often came to spoil the rituals and ceremonies of the Vedic Rishis in the early Aryan settlements soon softened their opponents and bended their knees before the Aryan fire-altars; and the old Rishi of flowing white beard and stately matted locks, as he gave benediction to his new convert, never forgot to plant in his heart the seed of Aryan thought as

he marked his face and body with the symbols of holy ashes and the black spots of his homa libations." Writes a recent issue of the *Hindu Mission Bulletin* "The original peoples were converted to orthodox Brahminical Hinduism with Brahmin priests from India and Vedic sacrifices and this we know from Sanskrit inscriptions found in those lands: later on Buddhism followed suit. Even at the present day the people of Bali retain their Hindu Religion with the Hindu Gods, ritual of worship and philosophy and even the Hindu caste system. Brahminical Hindu Gods and Goddesses like Yama, Indra, Kubera, Saraswati, etc. are even to-day worshipped and honoured in Japan."

During the last 30 years much research work in the islands of South Eastern Asia has been done by Dutch Scholars like Kern, Brandes, Krom for reconstructing the history of those regions. We are glad that Indian Scholars are now beginning to take up this research work. Professor Kalidas Nag who returned recently from Bali and was amidst us declared in a speech in Madras that "the people of greater India left a marvellous history and even now while one travelled through Indo-China (Champa) one saw there glorious monuments of Indian art and culture and felt as if their ancestors were yet living." The Professor in his article on "Greater India Revisited" in the October number of the *Modern Review* gives us an interesting picture of the library of a Balinese Pandit. "Sitting in the outhouse on a long wooden seat so similiar to the Indian model", he writes, "the Balinese Pandit Dijilantik showed me one by one, the manuscripts of the Mahabharata, the Brahmanda and Vishnu Puranas, the Dharmasastra of Manu and Bhrgu, the Rajaniti etc., till I almost forgot that I was thousands of miles away from India, the original home of these Sastras which I saw in Balinese garb." There is a vast field of research open to Indian Scholars. Let us also hope, as the Professor wishes, that Indian universities and learned societies will take steps to unravel this closed chapter of India's ancient glory.

AHIMSA AND BUDDHISM

In his article on "A plea for Buddhist Reform" Mr. Daljit Singh Sadharia, in the August number of *the Young East* asks the Buddhists to repudiate the "demoralising" doctrine of Ahimsa—this "scientific obscurantism"—and incorporate in the Buddhist system the teaching of science instead. The writer would like to hold Ahimsa as an accretion to Buddhism from the past ages

and not as a part of the Buddhistic doctrine. "The fourth great and most dangerous defect of Buddhism," he points out, "is its ahimsaism". And then states that this doctrine has not a little contributed to the emasculation of the Indian people and their fall into the present state of slavery and servitude. In his hatred of this tenet he wants to shove off this "sin" on other shoulders. He writes : "It must at once be admitted that this demoralising doctrine did not originate with Buddhism as wrongly supposed by many, but was preached and practised long before Buddha's time. The man who erected it into a religion was that degenerate Mahavira, the founder of Jainism " It seems evident that the writer is ignorant that this doctrine is as old as the Vedas and that the doctrine is a part and parcel of the Sanatana Dharma of the Hindu. For, the Vedas enjoin मा हिंसात् सर्वभूतानि cause no injury to any being—अहिंसा परमो धर्मः—Non-injury is the highest Virtue.

Ahimsa, the Aryan Dharma places in the first rung of the ladder for the aspirant of the highest bliss; so does the Rajayoga draw the attention of the Sadhaka first and foremost to the principle of Ahimsa. When we declare that this doctrine is older than Buddhism or Jainism we should not be understood to mean that the Lord Buddha did not preach this doctrine nor wish to have it as a tenet of the religion, he founded. The Dhammapada is one of the earliest authorities on the teachings of the Lord Buddha. It was recognised and accepted at the council of Asoka in 240 B.C. as a genuine collection of His sayings. And learned scholars of Buddhism have since declared that the Dhammapada "breathes the very spirit of the teacher" in whose solemn precepts men hear the voice of Sakyamuni summoning them to the life of contemplation, of strenuous mind culture." Therein we find him warning the monks thus : "Whoso seeks his own pleasure by another's pain, is entangled in hate and cannot get free." And again "To all life is dear, judge them by thyself and forbear to slay or to cause slaughter." Nor is this the only place where we find him expounding this great doctrine of Ahimsa. In his "Aryan Truth of the Way leading to the ceasing of Woe", he raises the question : "And what brethren is Right Aim ? "; and answers it himself by saying in no uncertain voice, "The being set on Renunciation, on Non-Resentment, on Harmlessness, that brethren is called Right Aim." Even though reformers of Buddhism may cast aside that beautiful story told of the lord Buddha's readiness to sacrifice his very life for a goat they cannot

but admit that the doctrine of Ahimsa which finds a place in the Dhammapada is His. No true Buddhist could therefore consider that the doctrine of Ahimsa is an accretion, much less stigmatise it as "degenerate" as the writer has done.

We find it to be one of the cardinal doctrines in all the great religions of the world. It has found a place in the Hindu Scriptures, in the Bible, and in the Quran. Nay even the Hedonist of the present day has tried to explain in his own way this innate higher nature of man. In our own times, its greatest exponent, Mahatma Gandhi explains it "as a complete absence of ill-will against all that lives" and in his warm advocacy of it says, "It embraces even sub-human life, not excluding noxious insects or beasts. They have not been created to our destructive propensities. If we only knew the mind of the Creator, we should find then their proper place in His creation. Non-violence is therefore in its active form good-will towards all life. It is pure love * * We pretend to believe that retaliation is the law of our being, whereas in every scripture we find that retaliation is nowhere obligatory, but only permissible. It is restraint that is obligatory. Retaliation is indulgence requiring elaborate regulating. Restraint is the law of our being. For highest perfection is unattainable without highest restraint."

If Ahimsa has been put before mankind as an ideal worthy to be followed from the days of the Vedas up to the present day then how is it that the present writer condemns this doctrine in Buddhism as unsound? He believes "this mischief" is producing "such dire results" and "is an enemy of patriotism." "Though there were other causes" the writer observes, "it was this mischievous cult of non-killing which contributed" to India's downfall. May we remind the writer that the mighty empires of the Mauryas and the Guptas, that of Kanishka and Harsha flourished in this soil of India between Buddha's time and the Mohammedan conquest. Some of the greatest names of Indian History—that of Asoka, Kanishka, Harsha—were all connected with Buddhism—so we have to look elsewhere than this cult of non-killing for the downfall of India. Evidently it is "the present state of slavery and servitude" of India that makes it necessary for this reform in Buddhism. Asks the writer, "What would have happened had Japan practised Ahimsa in her dealings with the Western Powers? She would certainly have lost her independence and could not have occupied the proud position in the

council of the nations which she is enjoying today. It was the sword that brought the haughty Czar to his reason and checked the tide of European imperialism. It is the physical force that counts most in international politics. There is nothing in this world but centres of force in constant evolution, in unceasing action and reaction on each other. The will to power and to subject to its dominion is the fundamental fact of the life of the universe. The doctrine of Ahimsa is wholly opposed to the teaching of the theory of evolution." Ahimsa does not tally with the Darwinian theory! That is why the writer wants to reform Buddhism according to Western standards of civilisation. To the writer the world is all in all. To the Buddha the world was worth nothing at all. The world is without permanence or purpose, no reality and no purpose save that of retribution; man's only happiness is to escape it. The calm and peaceful frame of mind is the only happy one—"the promise of a rest hereafter ineffable and placid," to this end must man endeavour. Such is the substance of the Buddha's teaching. How can this tally with the ideal of one moving in a materialistic world? Hence comes the conflict. But the writer's love for Buddhism would not allow him to give it up; he would therefore remould it according to his ideals to "fit the modern mind" and "this age of enlightenment and progress". But the Buddhism which the writer wishes to be a world religion cannot be the great glorious faith chalked out by its founder, the Lord Buddha.

CHRISTIANISING INDIA

Lord Meston, formerly Governor of the United Provinces addressing the Gloucester Diocesan Convention held recently in Cheltenham remarked in the course of his speech that Christianity was the only solution for the tremendous problems which faced India and hence the utmost necessity of patching up their own differences for the great task of Christianising India. It was not as a protagonist of Christian missions, but as one who knew and loved India where he spent the best part of his life, he said, that he uttered this frank and honest statement. In short Lord Meston believes in the "Civilizing" nature of Christianity. It is not the first time that we hear such statements from responsible and well known men. When Englishmen who have spent the best part of their lives in India as Lord Meston has done utter such statements, no wonder that Englishmen in England "liken the people of India to wild beasts of a zoo" and declare that

Indians are "barbarian, barbarous, barbaric." Should India adopt Christianity for her own good and the good of the world? In no uncertain voice does the Christian missionary Rev. John Haynes Holmes speak about it in the Divali Art Annual of the *Bombay Samachar*. He calls upon India to be faithful to its own religion. Says he, "Be not deceived by Christianity! As embodied in the person of Jesus and as defined by the Sermon on the Mount and the two great commandments of the law, Christianity is a great and noble religion. Its precepts of love as taught and lived by the Nazarene, I would commend to all of them. But Christianity as preached by Churches, as practised by Governments, and as carried far and wide by soldiers and missionaries is an abomination. Having nothing of it Gandhiji has done many wise as well as noble things in his unparalleled career of political and spiritual leadership. In nothing has he been wiser and nobler than in acknowledging his grateful indebtedness to Jesus but steadfastly remaining a Hindu. I sometime wonder if religion, as organized anywhere, can ever save the race. Certain I am that if any religion can save any people, it will be no foreign cult or creed but its own faith from the spirit of its own life."

"Let India be India. You have much to learn from us, as we have much to learn from you. No race, or country, or civilization or religion, has a monopoly of virtue. But the first condition of all interchange is self-culture and self-respect." Whom are we to look to for guidance—the missionary of Christ who sees the rottenness of European Christianity or the Pro-Consul who is enamoured of his Christian 'Kultur' and Christian Civilisation? We can only say with another missionary of Christ—the Rev. Mr. Sunderland, "If there is a land where nations and peoples have over and over and for long periods of times, acted like animals in the zoo or the jungle—springing at one another's throats and devouring one another that land is not India, it is Europe." Is India to adopt for its own future welfare that Christianity which has produced such visible and baneful effect upon mankind?

WHO BROUGHT THE IDEA OF DEMOCRACY IN INDIA?

Said the same ex-Governor in the above reported speech that democracy was the last thing that entered the mind of the Indian people and democracy was "absolutely foreign to their conception." Time and again such false notions have been dinned into young India's ears by the West. But India of the ages ever believed these words of her own Rishis that सत्यमेव जयते "Truth verily prevails," and in spite of these falsifiers of the West and their "Manasaputras" in this country to hypnotise young India, her children have been unfolding to the seekers of truth that democracy was nothing new to ancient India. Her history whether in the North or the South shewed that democratic life was not an unknown feature in politics or social life. But the ex-ruler of the United Provinces told his Christian audience that it was Britain that introduced the democratic principles into this ancient country. India's greatest scientist, Sir J. C. Bose in his inspiring address to the outgoing graduates of the University of Mysore answers

to this lie that the West is trying to perpetuate in the world Says Sir J. C. Bose, "I do not know of any other country in the world, except India, where sons of kings and commons were required to live a life of simplicity and perfect equality under a great teacher. In our great epic we read of a great tournament that was held before the Court of Hastinapura more than thirty centuries ago. Karna, the reputed son of a charioteer, had challenged the supremacy of Prince Arjuna. To this challenge Arjuna had returned a scornful answer; 'A prince could not cross swords with one who could claim no nobility of descent.' 'I am my own ancestor' replied Karna, 'and my deeds are my patents of nobility.' "This is perhaps the earliest assertion of the right of man to choose and determine his own destiny." What different angles of vision between the Westerners and the Orientals. !

THE DUTY OF MUSSALMANS AT PRESENT

Dr. Suhrawady Judge of the Calcutta High Court in his message to the new weekly *Young Muslim* expresses his great pain and regret to find "Hindusthan the home of wisdom and Divine philosophy torn by the clash of conflicting interests and warring creeds" and speaks to his fellow Muslims to be true followers of their religion. "Believing," says he, "in the Gospel of self-effacement, self-abnegation and self-surrender (Islam) following a faith which derives its very name from peace (S.L.M.) belonging to a community whose daily greetings spell peace and good will (Salam), a humble disciple of the great Master whose glorious epithet is the mercy and peace maker of the worlds, I cannot think of any message today other than that of peace and unity, so eloquently preached by our holy faith which is being profaned by the foolish deeds of its followers." Islam has been maligned because of the profane deeds of its followers. Whatever Mohammed may have said and done his followers led by their "Moulvis" never have tried to establish Allah in the hearts of his followers by the Gospel of universal love. They have taught their flock a Muslim brotherhood and not a Universal brotherhood. If the youth of Islam inspired by the noblest teachings of the faith and the highest ideals of righteousness and piety assert themselves, we believe with Dr. Suhrawady that they can without difficulty overwhelm the militant aggression we see today in the fair name of Islam and drive the forces of violence into the back ground. The noble giver of this message has exhorted his fellow Muslims to remember and faithfully follow in letter and spirit the Quranic verse which in clear and unmistakeable terms calls upon the faithful to co-operate for the advancement of the cause of truth and piety and sternly non-co-operate with sinfulness and transgression. This is the way to vindicate Islam—not by creating troubles for saving the head of a murderer. Let us hope that in the years to roll on we shall have a host of young Muslims worthy of the great religion Mohammed founded.

NEWS AND REPORTS

ORISSA AND GUZERAT FLOODS

The Ramakrishna Mission has been carrying on relief work at Hanspat in Dhamnagar Thana, South Balasore since September last and has also opened another centre at Dehurda in Bhograi Thana, North Balasore. The last weekly distribution consisted of 184 maunds of rice among sufferers belonging to 81 different villages. Total failure of crops has made the situation extremely grave and the relief works will have to be continued for several months. Sufficient funds are therefore necessary to cope with the situation. Our appeal has not yet met with any adequate response. We believe however that the cause of humanity will not go unheeded and that the poor sufferers will not fail to receive proper attention from the sympathetic public.

The Mission from its Bombay Branch Centre at Khar despatched a relief party to Cambay in July last immediately after the floods in Guzerat. The party opened a centre at Tarapur and extended the relief operation as funds permitted. The Mission is at present working in 92 villages from four relief centres over an approximate area of 400 square miles. Besides rice distribution 3,840 pieces of cloth have been distributed and food stuff sold at cheap rates. If sufficient funds be forthcoming re-building of huts will be taken up.

Contribution however small will be thankfully received and acknowledged. Address for sending help :—

(1) The President, Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math P.O. Dist., Howrah.

(2) The Manager, Udbodhan, 1, Mukherjee Lane, Baghbazar, Calcutta.

(Sd.) SUDDHANANDA,
Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION RELIEF WORK

Accounts from June to November, 1926 *Sonthal Pergs: Scarcity Relief Work (June to August)* :—A centre was started at Jamtara from where 10 weekly distributions of rice and other food grains were given to 719 distressed inhabitants of 33 villages. Total quantity of rice distributed was 223 mds., 26 seers, 8 chts., dal 3 mds., gram 122 mds, seeds 60 mds., salt 20 mds. New cloth 50 pieces and old cloths 752 pieces.

Besides these, for the purpose of supplying drinking water 22 wells and one tank were dug and one tank was repaired. Distressed people were engaged in their works and received doles of rice for their labour.

Midnapore Scarcity Relief Work (July) :—A centre was started at Paikmajita from where 4 weekly distributions of rice were given to 1,077 distressed inhabitants of 45 villages. Total quantity of rice distributed was 136 mds.

Receipts and Expenditure for the above two centres :—Received by donation Rs. 1,590-11-9. Sale proceeds of rice Rs. 4-15-0, from the Ramakrishna Mission Provident Relief Fund Rupees 24,01-8-3. Total Rs. 3,997-3-0.

Expenditure :—Rice bought Rs. 2,312-9-0, other food grains Rs. 630-13-9, cloths Rs. 49-5-0, transit Rs. 68-7-0, travelling and inspection Rs. 166-13-9, equipment Rs. 6-10-6, workers' expenses (for 9 workers) Rs. 101-12-3, establishment Rs. 19-3-6, stationery Rs. 5-14-9, postage Rs. 25-12-0, printing Rs. 6-2-0, pecuniary help Rs. 57-8-6, medical relief Rs. 8-2-3, agricultural relief Rs. 241-0-0, water scarcity relief Rs. 15-4-3, aids for hut building Rs. 268-0-0, test work Rs. 0-5-6, sacks Rs. 7-13-0, miscellaneous expenses Rs. 5-10-0. Total Rs. 3,997-3-0.

Midnapore Flood Relief Work (from 22nd August to 17th November) :—Five centres were started from where 2,106 mds., 27 seers of rice, 25 mds., 15 seers, chira and 1 md. of salt were distributed to 5,218 distressed inhabitants of 110 villages. Also 1,405 new cloths and 1,971 old cloths were distributed.

Receipts and Expenditure for the above work : Received by donation Rs. 15,824-13-1½, sale proceeds of sacks and rice etc., Rs. 519-4-3, from the Ramakrishna Mission Provident Relief Fund Rs. 2,100-3-3. Total Rs. 18,444-4-7½.

Expenditure :—Rice for distribution bought Rs. 14,700-1-3, other food grains bought Rs. 413-2-3, cloths bought Rs. 970-12-0, sacks bought Rs. 231-2-9, transit charges Rs. 610-4-3, travelling and inspection Rs. 467-0-6, equipment Rs. 223-10-3, workers' expenses (for 20 workers) Rs. 619-12-7½, establishment Rs. 70-6-9, stationery Rs. 11-15-3, postage Rs. 70-5-0, pecuniary help Rs. 25-9-0, medical help Rs. 3-0-0, miscellaneous expenses Rs. 27-2-3. Total Rs. 18,444-4-7½.

This account was audited on the 10th February, 1927, and found correct by Mr. N. K. Majumdar, M.A., G.D.A., Government Certified Auditor, who is the Honorary Auditor of the Ramakrishna Mission.

We regret that we could not publish this account earlier.

(Sd.) SUDDHANANDA,

Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission,

The 21st November, 1927.

CYCLONE DISASTER IN NELLORE AND RAMAKRISHNA MISSION

The public are by this time aware of the havoc caused in Nellore by the recent cyclone. The report having reached us that the people had been rendered homeless and destitute, relief was considered absolutely necessary. Therefore the Ramakrishna Mission, Madras, despatched a party of workers on the 7th November, 1927, to inspect the affected areas and organise relief.

Relief has now been afforded to a good many people in the form of rice and clothes at a cost of a few thousands of rupees. Half-a dozen members of the Mission are still working in the field. Though the distress is spread over a wide area the Mission owing to paucity of funds has been forced to confine itself only to areas where the distress is acute. We take this opportunity of thanking those who have already contributed their mite towards this relief work. We hope to publish a detailed account later on.

THE VEDANTA KESARI

"Let the lion of Vedanta roar."

"Let me tell you, strength is what we want
And the first step in getting strength is to uphold
The Upanishads and believe that 'I am the Atman'."

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

VOLUME XIV]

JANUARY 1928

[NUMBER 9

PRAYER

ॐ

नमो नमो वाङ्मनसातिभूमये
नमो नमो वाङ्मनसैकभूमये ।
नमो नमोऽनन्तमहाविभूतये
नमो नमोऽनन्तदयैकसिन्धवे ॥
न चर्मनिष्ठोऽस्मि न चात्मवेदी
न भक्तिर्मास्त्वचरणारविन्दे ।
अकिञ्चनोऽनन्यगतिः शरण्यं
त्वत् पादमूलं शरणं प्रपद्ये ॥

Salutations unto Thee, O Lord, the Origin of mind and speech but Whom neither can comprehend. Oh God of eternal glory, Thou boundless ocean of mercy, salutations unto Thee.

I have done no good deeds ; nor do I know the Self ; nor am I devoted to Thy lotus feet ; I have none. Thou art my only refuge ; Oh Lord, I take shelter in Thee.

YAMUNACHARYA.

SPIRITUAL TALKS OF SWAMI BRAHMANANDA

Q. Maharaj, with all my efforts I cannot control my mind, it is so restless. Please, do tell me how to curb it.

A. No doubt, to control the mind is a difficult task, but not an impossibility. By regular practice it can be tempered and brought under restraint. Do therefore perform a little meditation everyday, and never fail to do it. The nature of the mind is to run away like a restless boy. Drag it back whenever it seeks to go out, and set it to the meditation of God. If you can continue this struggle for two to three years, you will find in you a joy unspeakable; and your mind, calm and docile. In the beginning meditation proves very difficult and dry. But if you insist in meditation, like the taking of medicine then you will find in it a perennial source of joy pure and unalloyed. What terrible ordeals does not a student go through to pass in his examinations? Verily I say unto you God-realisation is far easier than that. If you call upon Him with sincerity and an unperturbed mind, He will surely reveal Himself unto you.

Q. If I have been able to pass in the examinations why shall I not be able to see God—this is most hopeful. But at times when I think that with so much of meditation as I do I have not made any progress, I consider all this is vain attempt and a horrible despondency overwhelms me and I despair of success. What shall I do then Sir?

A. No, never despair, there's no cause for it. The law of Karma is irresistible. If you do a good work it

will ever produce a good effect. With sincere devotion or without it, in any way you like, if you chant the holy name of God it will always bring you good. The result is inevitable. Therefore shake off all your despair and push on in the struggle with strictness and regularity. Then peace will surely come and reside in you, not otherwise. Through meditation not the mind only becomes pacified but the body also improves and diseases lessen. Therefore, even from the standpoint of good health one should practice meditation.

Q. Maharaj, what is the necessity of spiritual initiation ?
Without the help of a guide, if a man in his own way, devotes himself entirely to God, will not that be enough for realising Him ?

A. Initiation is necessary because it helps concentration. When you are initiated you are shown the object upon which the mind is to be concentrated. You cannot keep your mind wavering from one thing to another. But if you are not initiated, you have no particular object to concentrate upon. To-day you fix your mind on Hari, to-morrow on Kali, and the third day on the formless Brahman. A grim restlessness is the result. This is most harmful to an aspirant. Until this state is overcome and substituted by a peaceful attitude of mind, spiritual realisation will ever remain an object unknown. So, for attaining this calmness of mind and averting unsteadiness, initiation or the help of a guide is necessary. Moreover, the spiritual path is a most formidable one strewn with innumerable pitfalls. And unless a man is guided by an experienced hand, however clever he may be, he is sure to stumble and get ruined. Hence the necessity of a guide or Guru,

Without troubling yourself much, work hard, my boy, then will you find joy. In the beginning you are to drudge on like one at the alphabet for the first time. Don't worry, don't complain, gradually will peace come in. Do you know, how I behave with those who always complain that they are not finding peace or joy ? For the first two to three years after their initiation, I give no reply, nor do I pay heed to them. But, after that period, when they meet me, they tell me that they are making some progress and also finding some joy and peace. A man must steadily try for some time before he can expect a peaceful state of mind. Therefore I ask you to struggle for a period of at least three years without any break and then you can have a claim for joy and not earlier. You won't do anything and yet want to succeed. It is most absurd. Nothing great can be achieved by trickery or idleness. If you really want peace, if you really want to realise God, then steadily work and wait. For spiritual realisation is a question of time.

(To K.) It is also true that in spite of your best efforts you can do nothing before its due time. Time determines everything. Nevertheless yours is to struggle and to wait. The mother bird knows well when to open the egg. So the Divine Mother reveals Herself to the devotee when the time is ripe. Work and wait. This period is a very hard time. The devotee is always in suspense—once hope, then despair ; now joy, the next moment sorrow ; a great struggle goes on. He is constantly in the midst of a fierce duel and this continues till he is blessed with His vision. But if he is under a competent guide, he can be much relieved of this struggle. An expert guide can give an upward lift to the struggling mind even when it is not mature.

But it has its dangers too. If it is repeated too often, the disciple cannot hold it and the result is a greater struggle and a gloomier despair.

In this struggling period of Sadhana the aspirant must be always alert. He must follow certain fixed rules of conduct and must never deviate from them. He must observe perfect continence and eat only such food that has a soothing effect on the body. He will have to be under the direct guidance of an expert. All on a sudden he must not exert his brain too much in meditation. If he does otherwise he is sure to suffer. His brain will become heated, and consequently he will feel giddy ; and many other brain troubles will follow. Meditation in the primary stage being a regular warfare with the mind—the mind constantly going outwards and the Sadhaka trying to drag it back to the feet of the Lord, there is every possibility of the brain getting overheated. The aspirant should prevent this crisis with great care. Nor should a man in the beginning of his Sadhana apply himself in practising Pranayama (control of breath) and other Hatayogic exercises. Slowly and steadily he should proceed in the spiritual path. Then he will find these preliminary struggles disappearing one by one. Finally he will attain to the state of real meditation. At that stage even though he meditates for pretty long hours, three or four hours or more, at a stretch, he will feel as refreshed both in body and mind as after deep sleep. He will feel great joy in him. The spiritual novice must also keep a special eye as to his diet. The body and the mind being closely connected, the least change in the one is followed by a corresponding change in the other. If the stomach is irritated by taking any improper food, the mind too will have a like

effect. And for a restless mind meditation is impossible. It is for this reason that so much stringency is laid on the dietetic regulations of a Sadhaka.

Under no circumstances, again, should the Sadhaka fill more than one half of his stomach with his usual food. And half of the remaining half is to be left for water, while the rest should be kept empty for the free passage of air. Furthermore, an aspirant must not be dejected in spirit, by ruminating on his sins. Whatever huge sin a man may commit, it is so only with reference to the limited vision of man ; from the absolute standpoint, from the standpoint of God it is nothing at all. A single glance of the Lord and all monstrous sins of millions of births are set at naught. All heavy punishments that are prescribed for sins in the scriptures are but for the upkeep of the social discipline and for making people refrain from the evil ways of life. God, our Father, is ever merciful to us. He is ever loving to His children. His name removes all evils. Therefore, there is no cause for dejection to them who sincerely call upon Him. It is also true that as the result of our past actions, at times dejection and despair overtake our mind. But that is no reason why a Sadhaka should bow down to them. Knowing that past actions may exert themselves on him, he should be prepared to fight them outright. God will give him strength. His name will be his impenetrable armour. It will save him from all consequences. This is one way of Sadhana. It is rather dry and monotonous in the beginning. There is another path, I mean, the path of the Vaishnavite. It is a very nice path. It does not involve much hardship as the other path. It is most gentle. In this path you are to contemplate

the life and deeds of Sri Krishna, Sri Rama or any other incarnation of Lord Vishnu. There is no monotony, no drudgery in it. A devotee is to bring about some relation with God and worship Him. But this also has great dangers. For it has often been found that many unfit persons, in their attempt to worship God as a lover, have fallen off from their ideal.

EDITORIAL NOTES

United India

During the Christmas week representative men of culture and leading from the various provinces of India gathered together to attend the Indian National Congress and the various conferences convened along with it. The vast assemblage of many brilliant sons of India who had met on those platforms had the rare and valuable privilege of exchanging their thoughts and views with one another and strengthening the bonds of sympathy and love so very essential for the making of a united India. This remarkable gathering very naturally gives rise to some reflections in our minds and we deem it our duty to share them with our readers. As might naturally be expected, politics has been the most important topic that has engrossed the attention of the representatives and the public at large. This has undoubtedly borne some fruitful results. It is not on the political aspects of the several problems that are facing our country at the present day that we wish to make some observations here. Rather we would engage the attention of our readers in the deeper and more universal considerations that lie at the root of our national existence.

Common Bonds

It is almost a truism that for the promotion and fostering of a healthy national life the first and foremost at-

tempt should be directed towards the discovery and thorough understanding of the common bonds of unity, common interest, common aspirations, common sentiments and emotions that are the very springs of action in both individual and collective life. Undeniably there are such bonds of union and sympathy in our country. It might even be contended that among subject peoples the awakening of the desire for political freedom and independent national life is itself a sufficient motive power and bond of unity.

The love of one's motherland and the natural longing to see her free and independent stir the deepest depths of the human heart and ought to prove strong enough to silence all other conflicting interests and considerations. Yet the public life of our country today presents a very ugly picture disfigured by insane religious quarrels, communal strifes and class schisms. The love of political freedom which alone gives people the power to set aright the numerous inequalities and evils which trouble them is not sufficiently strong in our countrymen. This is an unfortunate state of affairs, which is plain even to the most superficial observers. The most laudable attempts to bring about unity that have been and are being made by our leaders are not such as to inspire much confidence in the minds of the unsophisticated. We have not the least desire to minimise the importance of the part played by the politicians. While they would continue exploring all possible avenues of rapprochement among the various warring sections by suitable compromises and make-shifts, we believe very strongly that in the peculiar circumstances of our country, too much emphasis and importance cannot be given to the common religious and spiritual back-ground of our people.

Common elements in Provincial culture

The common religious foundation of the national life has been emphasised many a time in these pages. Next in

importance come the common points of contact in the various provincial and linguistic cultures. Let us take for instance the case of the prominent men from the several provinces of India who meet on a common platform from time to time ; the Punjabee and the Madrasee, the Bengalee and the Maharashtrian, to refer only to some of the most prominent cases, are woefully ignorant of the special and peculiar features of one another's culture and tradition. The thoughts and sentiments that lie imbedded in the religious and popular lore of saints and reformers like Tulsidas, Kabir, Nanak, Chaitanya, Ram-Prasad, Tukaram, Jnaneswar, Ramdas, Manickavasakar, Nammalwar and other saints remain more or less unknown outside their respective provinces. Still less familiar are the best writings of poets and thinkers who represent the noblest thoughts and ideas of their times. In the pilgrimage centres and railway trains when persons of different provinces meet together, their ignorance of one another's language, manners and customs not unoften lead to unfortunate misunderstandings. Even when there is no occurrence of open breach of civil behaviour the contempt for their mutual peculiarities is scarcely kept under complete disguise. An appreciative and intimate knowledge of the life and teachings of the great saints of India on the part of the people of different provinces must inevitably lead to a sympathetic understanding of one another's culture and traditions. Over and above their spiritual fervour and devotion, the catholicity of sympathy and the democratic spirit common to one and all of them is most remarkable. Their teachings have also another very important bearing upon one of the most vexed questions with which we are faced at the present day. We mean the uplift of the poor and oppressed classes. Any one who reverently seeks to imbibe their spirit cannot escape the contagion of their all-absorbing love and sympathy towards the submerged classes. It is

also noteworthy that many of these saints themselves have come from the not-very-respectable classes.

The heart of these children of God cried for the poor and lowly of the land. They all proclaimed in a trumpet voice that in the eyes of God the distinction of high and low, rich and poor, learned and ignorant simply have no meaning whatsoever. They illustrated in their everyday life their unshakable faith that only those that are pure in heart and those that do good are the beloved of the Lord, and none else.

The key-note of their popularity which continues undiminished even up to the present day is to be found in their recognition of all men and women as veritable manifestation of the Divine, and in their eagerness to devote their life for the service of His children. All who are eager to see that our depressed classes come to occupy their due place in the social order cannot do better than walk in the footsteps of these saints.

The function of Library Academy

For the last quarter of a century laudable attempts are being made in various provinces of India to popularise their respective literature by bringing out attractive and authoritative editions of the best products in their languages.

It will be admitted on all hands that this kind of organised attempt has brought forth many excellent fruits. There is however some need to guard against a kind of danger which is likely to grow into serious forms if timely prevention is not taken. We refer to the growth of provincial spirit and clannish exclusiveness. It is not suggested that such a parochial spirit is a necessary consequence of the organisation of literary academy. Before the provincial bias develops partisan and disruptive tendencies it is the duty of all academies to translate

into their respective mother tongues the best products and achievements of their sister languages and do all in their power to promote a comparative study of the general cultures in India and lay the foundation of national unity deep and secure in the hearts of their people.

Common Language

There now arises the question of the adoption of a common language for all India. We are aware that many patriotic and far-seeing statesmen have given their best thought to this important question. But we are afraid that this problem has not attracted that amount of attention which it deserves. Time was when many responsible leaders thought of making the English language the *Lingua Franca* of India. But it is gratifying to note that such an unnatural and preposterous dream has been deservedly given up. That Hindi possesses several advantages and answers to most of the requirements of a common language for such a vast continent as India, we need not proceed to examine in detail. By far the most appealing and material argument in its favour is that it can be understood in almost all provinces except in South India. Another excellent point in its favour is that it is a language intelligible to the majority of the Mussalmans as well. But when the principle of re-organisation of provinces on a linguistic basis comes to be accepted—the Indian National Congress has already adopted it—the question of a common script along with that of a common language would arise for federal and inter-provincial purposes only. The adoption of a common script or language need not cause any fear in the mind of even the most ardent admirer of his mother tongue. It is quite possible to keep any provincial language fresh, vigorous and glowing as it would be the official language of a particular area. The cultivation of a national language for federal concerns need not be felt to be a heavy burden, as this task will fall upon

the shoulders of only a small and select number of persons, in every province.

Inter-University Co-operation

The process of the exchange and assimilation of the provincial cultures might be greatly facilitated by the various universities working together in a team spirit. The professors of one university can be invited by another to deliver a course of lectures on the literature, arts, history, music, painting and other branches of learning. Whenever possible a programme or study-tour by the students in the company of their professors would have to be organised. In a poor country like India unless the state comes to the assistance of the universities with substantial and liberal grants any such scheme however beneficial cannot materialise. The value of the widening of the intellectual and imaginative horizon of the youths by a visit and close observation of the several places in India rich in sacred and historical associations cannot be over-estimated.

The visit to holy centres of pilgrimage like Benares and Hardwar, Rameswaram and Kanyakumari, Dwaraka and Puri; the birth-places of Sri Ramachandra, Sri Krishna, Bhagavan Buddha, Sankara, Ramanuja and Chaitanya and other prophets and saints; the ancient university town of Taxila, Nalanda and Patali-putra and noteworthy cites like Agra, Delhi and Poona are sure to bring home to the young and receptive minds the fundamental unity of India.

Parliament of Religions

Another direction in which the promotion of Unity is possible is to convene an annual Parliament of Religions either along with the National Congress or on other convenient occasions when the representatives of various religions and sects will meet on a common platform with the sole motive of knowing one another more intimately and recognising the essential harmony of all their faiths. Some might be inclined to think that at this juncture when

mutual tension and strife may be apprehended at any place attempts in this direction are likely to be productive of more harm than good. We confess we are not in a position to endorse such gloomy forebodings not that we treat lightly the manifestations of jealousy and hatred, but we consider it a mere passing phase. We have unshakable faith in the good sense and spirit of toleration lying embedded in the hearts of our people everywhere in India. The activities of the Ramakrishna Mission for the past thirty years and more have succeeded in enlisting the hearty co-operation and sympathy of the enlightened in all creeds and religions.

The only preliminary requisite is that attitude of mind which will be ever ready to pay homage to Truth and goodness wherever found and these are not the exclusive monopoly of any religion or sect.

An Appeal to our Countrymen

The several directions in which the promotion of national Unity is possible have been indicated above. But by far the most crying need at the present moment is the careful cultivation of the highest form of patriotism that would be in perfect harmony with the noblest ideals of religions. The fact of a man being a Hindu, Mussalman or Christian or Punjabee, Bengalee or Madrasee should not allow him to forget even for a moment that he is a child of Mother India. It should be the duty of every educational institution in the country to foster in all possible ways the spirit of brotherhood and toleration along with a sincere love for the Motherland. No one can contemplate with unconcern the low position which India occupies in the opinion of other nations of the world. The reason for this unfortunate condition is that our people have not yet learnt to think in terms of their country at large and its people. It is with a view to arouse the spirit of Indian solidarity that Swami Vivekananda the prophet of spiritual nationalism exhorts his countrymen as follows :

“ Oh, India, forget not that thy marriage, thy wealth, thy life are not for sense pleasure ; forget not that thou art born as a sacrifice to the Mother's altar ; forget not that thy social order is but the reflex of the Infinite Universal Motherhood ; forget not that the lower classes, the ignorant, the poor, the illiterate, the cobbler, the sweeper, are thy flesh and blood, thy brothers. Thou brave one, be bold, take courage, be proud that thou art an Indian and proudly proclaim, ‘ I am an Indian, every Indian is my brother.’ Say, ‘ The ignorant Indian, the poor and destitute Indian, the Brahmin Indian, the Pariah Indian is my brother.’ Thou too clad with but a rag round thy loins proudly proclaim at the top of thy voice, ‘ The Indian is my brother, the Indian is my life, India's gods and goddesses are my God, India's society is the cradle of my infancy, the pleasure garden of my youth, the sacred heaven, the Baranasi of my old age.’ Say, brother, ‘ The soil of India is my highest heaven, the good of India is my good’, and repeat and pray day and night, ‘ Oh Thou Lord of Gouri, O Thou Mother of the Universe vouchsafe manliness unto me ! O Thou Mother of strength, take away my weakness, take away my unmanliness, and **MAKE ME A MAN !**”

THE STATE OF THE EMANCIPATED SOUL ACCORDING TO VEDANTA

By Sridhar Majumdar, M.A.

Illustrious students of Vedanta devoted their earnest attention to a critical study of the state which an individual soul attains in emancipation ; they based their conclusions on the authority of Sruti which is the outcome of direct intuition of the Seers of old, called Rishis.

One class of students hold that emancipation consists in complete merger or dissolution of the individual soul in Brahman, the Universal Soul. They, in support of their assertion, cite *Srutis* of the following nature :

"The blessed soul, coming out of the body, robed in his finest effulgence, stands revealed in his own pristine glory." (Chhandogya Upanishad, Chap. VIII, 3, 4).

"He being bodiless, nothing pleasant or unpleasant touches him." (Chhandogya Upanishad, Chap. VIII, 12, 1).

"This self has neither inside nor outside, but is altogether massive intense consciousness." (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, Chap. IV, 5, 13).

Another class of students maintain that the individuality of the finite self is never dissolved altogether, even in the state of Mukti. They, on the other hand, in support of their view, cite Srutis of the following nature :

"He becomes the lord of himself,—his movements are unfettered in all the worlds." (Chhandogya Upanishad, Chap. VII, 25, 2).

"If he desires the vicinity or presence of the fathers, by the mere fiat of his will the fathers present themselves." (Chhandogya Upanishad, Chap. VIII, 2, 1).

"There he moves at large, enjoying himself, playing and making himself merry." (Chhandogya Upanishad, Chap. VIII, 12, 3).

The views of the two classes of students seem at the first sight to be conflicting; and doubt arises as to the truth of at least one or the other class of the Srutis. But these doubts are completely dispelled and the views of both classes of students fully vindicated, when we turn to the view of a third class of students holding that even in his released state Jiva may be said to be different from, as well as the same with, Brahman, i.e., Dualism standing side by side with Monism (Dwaitadwaita). The emancipated soul, according to this view, is revealed in his own normal pristine form, but not in the form of a deity nor in any borrowed form; and thus being released from his late state of bondage (wherein he felt himself as a distinct entity from Brahman), he abides in the glory of his true Self which is no other than Brahman Himself; and though a part of Brahman, he perceives himself as assimilated to, and at the same time separable from, Him. Srutis of the following nature lend support to this doctrine :

"He enjoys all desires with the Omniscient Brahman." (Taïttiriyaopanishad, Chap. II, 1, 2).

The emancipated finite self, according to this class of students, sometimes remains absorbed in Brahman and sometimes recovers his individuality, as is the case of a profound sleeper before and after awaking. For this view vide the Sruti :

"From unity to diversity and from diversity to unity I pass and repass." (Chhandogya Upanishad, Chap. VIII, 13, 1).

It will thus appear that the view of each class of students is true in respect of the particular aspect of the emancipated soul taken by them ; but the truth seems to be, according to Sruti, an adjustment of the partial views taken by the two classes of students. The sage Badarayana Vyasa also appears to have taken this all-embracing view, regarding the state of the emancipated soul, in his Vedanta Philosophy.

Acharya Jaimini thinks that the emancipated soul emerges from bondage as a person, endowed with the powers and attributes of Brahman. The sage Audulomi holds the view that the emancipated soul manifests itself solely as pure consciousness, without a personality on the back ground. Acharya Badarayana Vyasa decides that both the natures, namely pure consciousness and the possession of the powers and attributes of Brahman are manifested in the released soul, and that there is no incongruity between the two natures however incongruous they may appear in embodied beings, and Sruti supports both the views (Brahma Sutra, Chap. IV, 4, 5-7).

By the mere fiat of his will, the emancipated soul gets all his desires fulfilled ; he thus becomes lord of himself and owes allegiance to none else (Brahma Sutra, Chap. IV, 4, 8-9).

The sage Badari thinks that the emancipated soul is impersonal possessing neither body nor Indriyas, while Acharya Jaimini opines that he *does* possess a body with Indriyas. Acharya Badarayana Vyasa reconciles the disputants by saying that as Sruti contains indications of both the aspects, the emancipated soul may exist in both conditions at his option ; i.e. when he wishes to have a body of his own he presents himself

in one, and when he wishes to be without it he has none. There is, however, no hard and fast rule that the body assumed by the emancipated soul must be, in every case, created by his own will; he may sometimes have enjoyments by being united with a body created for him by the Lord, like the enjoyments, in dreams, of a living person. The Divine Will may, however, make use of the emancipated souls as tools, through the instrumentality of which It chooses to fulfil any of Its purposes. Besides, the emancipated soul may put on any garb contrived by himself suited to the fulfilment of that purpose. He has also the power of projecting himself into space, just as the light of a lamp expands far off and is reflected from many things at the same time. He becomes omniscient and is never unconscious; what is stated in Sruti about specific non-cognition, or total unconsciousness, is either regarding deep sleep or regarding death, but not regarding the emancipated soul in the closest union with the Lord. (Brahma Sutra, Chap. IV, 4, 10-16).

The emancipated soul, united with Brahman, becomes endowed with the powers and attributes of Brahman, except in the matters of creating, preserving and dissolving the worlds. He is no longer subject to mutations caused by births, deaths and other causes; but he possesses for all time the supreme consciousness of being one with the Lord. He attains equality with Brahman, only in respect of enjoyment, but not in respect of exercising authority in matters of creation and the like. He is not bound to return to this world and to undergo rebirth. (Brahma Sutra, Chap. IV, 4, 17-22).

THE PROBLEM OF HINDU SOCIAL REFORM

By Swami Iswarananda

There are two grim and serious dangers facing the progress of Hindu Society at the present day. The forces of reform and reaction are holding the scales almost evenly and social life looks as if it has reached a crisis, which demands a decision either to take a forward step or to go back to the olden days. The voice of reform has roused up the voice of reaction and day by day this society is getting divided more and more and is fast moving on to the verge of social strife.

By contact and friction with the outside nations of the world India has been roused up from her long torpor of centuries. A set of new and outlandish ideas, looking entirely foreign to everything old, imbibed at the feet of the West has been suddenly let loose upon a society which was running its even course of social life for numberless generations, blissfully ignorant of what the world outside the borders of India was doing. As the result of the new impact and awakening European ideas of materialism, rationalism, agnosticism, atheism, and individualism, driving in the chariot of Western science with the brilliance of a thousand suns, with hard-earned facts and figures and tangible proofs, dazzled a new generation of Hindus. A section among them, caught in this whirlpool of dazzling ideas, lost their faith in the past history of India and declared that Hindu society must be entirely overhauled from top to bottom if civilization is to dawn in this dark corner of the world.

Society was bound hand and foot by exacting rules which were holy and sacred. There was no freedom of thought or action. Life was to be lived to the minutest details according to the injunction of the Shastras, promulgated, in the name of God and religion, and the result was that social life was based on inequalities, distinctions between man and man, privileges for the few, cruelty and inhuman treatment towards the so-called low castes, curtailment of the freedom of women, etc. The reform party therefore advocated the complete destruction of all the existing state of things and reform of the Hindu Society along the lines of the civilized nations of the West. Abolition of the Varnashrama Dharma, free intermarriage and interdining between all castes from the Brahmin to the Pariah, free mingling of men and women, remarriage of widows, adoption of Western manners, customs, food, dress etc.—these according to them are the panacea for all the evils of Hindu Society. And more than all these the Shastras and the priests, the gods and the Rishis who were responsible between themselves for all the superstitions and degradations of the people must be once for all consigned to the Ganges for ever. Look to the West, they said, how rich, strong, progressive, and scientific, they are. We too must remodel our society if we are to be on a par with them.

On the other side the voice of conservatism said: "you outlandish, irreverent men, you must know that our society has

been guided and brought up by God-given laws promulgated from the beginning of creation. Shall we change these time-honoured customs and usages and draw upon ourselves the curses of the gods and the Pitris? What strange things, unheard of by our ancestors, are you proposing? The eternal punishment of hell will overtake us if we disobey the Shastras and the Mamool." A few educated champions of orthodoxy say: "Ours is the Sanathana Dharma and therefore it should not and cannot undergo any change; we have built up a society which has come down scatheless through scores of shining centuries inspite of foreign invasions and oppressions and alien influences. Show us another nation which had such a long lease of life. All great empires of the world such as Greece, Rome, Carthage, have come and gone like bubbles and here we stand, the oldest nation in the world, grown grey with experiences of centuries, but still alive. If our social laws and customs were bad we would have died long ago. Therefore all the injunctions of the Shastras must be for our good. We are not going to imitate the West and give up our Varnashrama Dharma. What! a Pariah to approach a Brahmin? Shall our girls go shameless into the streets holding the hand of any and every young dandy that comes across? Shall our women forget Sita and Damayanti and Savitri and change their husbands as they change their clothes? Shall our men and women dress like Westerners with close-fitting ugly trousers and jackets and go about naked to all intents and purposes? Pshaw! we shall not change our Shastric injunctions." Such is the reply of the orthodox in India.

Thus, the Western influence has brought as its greatest boon freedom of thought and action and a spirit of forward movement in the social life on the one hand, and on the other hand has roused up the spirit of reaction which, sometimes going to extremes, besides creeding fanaticism, gets beyond the control of those even who start the revival. Hindu social reform is therefore placed in a critical stage; either it should swing forward and break all old ties or it should swing backward and refuse to look at anything new. That sometimes seems to be the only alternative, either the old or the new. Which shall we follow? The reform party and the orthodox party are each pulling in their own way with tremendous strength and this society already divided into so many camps will be further weakened and torn to pieces, unless we get a real solution of the problem.

In the first place it is useless for the orthodox to say that no changes shall be made, and it is equally useless for the reformer to demand an entire remodelling. For both are trying the impossible. No society has ever remained stationary and yet lived on for ages, and Hindu society is not an exception to the law. And no society can ever cut itself entirely off from its old moorings without meeting instant death, and the Hindu need not dream that he could demonstrate otherwise.

In fact the Hindu social life in the past has been neither one of entire change nor of entire conservation. The Hindu had combined orthodoxy as well as reform. He was orthodox with regard to certain essentials of life and had left a wide margin for introducing changes with regard to non-essentials. It seems that a good deal of misunderstanding on questions of reform is due to the ignoring of this crucial fact and once this principle is firmly grasped by the educated as well as the uneducated, they will find a *via media* already existing and guiding the social life which would satisfy the demands of both the orthodox and the reformer.

For there are two sorts of truths in our scriptures, the Shastras; one set based upon the eternal nature of God, soul, and Nature and their relations to each other. This portion of our scriptures deals with the ways and means for the realization of the *summum bonum* of life and the varied wealth of experience gathered through countless ages by sages and seers who having realized the highest truth recorded them for the guidance of all mankind for all ages and climes. These are of a universal character and are known as Vedas, a treasure of spiritual laws, self-existent and eternal. And the Vedas therefore properly include all such self-existent truths and laws discovered by sages of all countries and all times. The Rishis through whom these laws were given out to mankind were only discoverers and so were known as Mantra Drashtas, seers of truths. The truths and the laws of spiritual science were ever in existence and will exist for ever, just as the laws of gravity or atmospheric pressure. And therefore this unchanging residue of our scriptures is known as the Sanathana Dharma. This Sanathana Dharma is it which works in the evolution of all mankind, nay of all Jivas, and the Hindu has sought therefore to bring it down to practical life by applying it to his social life. This applied Dharma was understood to be true only under certain conditions. It lacked

universality, being valid only under certain conditions, in a certain society, for a limited time. And this second class of Dharma chiefly embodied in the Smritis, Puranas and Tantras was known as Yuga Dharma, in contrast to the Vedanta, or the Sanathana Dharma. In this class of scriptures the teachings are therefore different. They deal with local circumstances environments of the time, social institutions of the period, customs, manners and so forth. They speak of duties arising from different environments and they change in course of time, and so we find differences and contradictions between the teachings of the various Smritis. One Smriti says, this is the custom and this should be the practice of this age ; another says, this should be the practice. There is one Achara for Satya Yuga another for Kali Yuga and so forth. One society at one stage of its evolution should follow such and such rules and others should be guided by quite a different set of rules as it is at a different stage of culture, so on and so forth. But the eternal laws of evolution known as Sanathana Dharma never change so long as man lives, they are for all times, omnipresent, universal virtues. Therefore it has to be understood that because a little social custom is going to be changed, we are not going to lose our Sanathana Dharma. We have to disabuse our minds of the idea that every village custom and grandmother's tale however harmful and superstitious they might be must be adhered to, because they are sanctioned by the Vedas and the Shastras. The rules and regulations found in the Smritis, Puranas and Tantras have been changed from time to time and we must know that the present day usages have come down to us after numberless changes in the past. There was a time in India when every Brahmin killed the cow and ate the beef, for in the Vedas we read that when a Sannyasin, a king, or a great man came into a house, hospitality required that he should be served with meat. Meat was considered to be the best of offerings to the Pitris and the *Manusmriti* prescribes thirty-two kinds of meat for Pitri Yagna. Later on finding that agriculture, the staple industry of the people would suffer by the destruction of cattle the practice was stopped and a voice was raised against the killing of cows. Thus we find in the Shastras, in the Smritis, what we would consider the most horrible customs.

As time passed all these laws had to be changed and new laws had to be made. Further local customs are various and contradictory which fact shows that these are not binding on all Hindus. The South Indian Brahmin would shudder at the

thought of taking meat, while the North Indian Brahmin thinks it most holy and sacred to offer goats by the hundreds in sacrifice and eat it as Mahaprasadam. In North India women without Purdah would receive the respect due to prostitutes, while in the South it is not at all disrespectable. To a Nambudiri woman post-puperty marriage is Shastric, while a Tamil Brahmin will be out-casted for that unshastric conduct. Various are the customs all over India, but they are local. The greatest mistake made by the ignorant conservative and the zealous reformer is to think that these local customs are the essentials of Hindu Dharma.

It is therefore with good justice and reason that the reform party says to the orthodox who maintain that all these laws must be retained, because these latter believe them to be the essentials and eternal of Sanathana Dharma. "Well, if such foolish and childish customs are the rare gems of your religion then we shall bid good-bye to your religion. We cannot look with respect to a God who has revealed that human beings should not approach other human beings, because they are born in a certain community, that they should be treated worse than dogs and cats. For a scripture that lays down that children should be married and babies become widows, no human being can have any regard. If *your* Varnashrama Dharma requires that women should have no freedom and that the tongue of a man called Sudra should be cut off if he utters the Veda, then it shall be our object of life to demolish *this* Varnashrama Dharma." Moreover they ask with perfect reason and justice : "Are you sincerely adhering to the Shastras? In spite of your professions are you not every day showing how your life, every minute of it, is a thousand and one contradictions to the Shastras? For example you Brahmin, you are not allowed by the Shastras to live in a country ruled by the Mlecchas. If you obey the Shastras, why don't you quit this country bag and baggage? Are you the three highest castes observing the Ashramas of Brahmacharya, Vanaprastha and Sannyasa? Money-making is not the profession for a Brahmin and yet you who stand for every letter of the Shastras are now a days hunting for all jobs under the sun reserved for the other castes. And when it is not for your convenience and privilege, when for example, the removal of untouchability is proposed, you, upper castes, you take shelter under the Varnashrama Dharma and the Shastras, because it is nothing to you, it is others who suffer. Is it not hypocrisy? You

will stand against widow-remarriage, but you men, you will take as many wives as you like—that is Shastra ?” That is the mistake very often made by the orthodox viz., to think that these Lokacharas and Desacharas are the essentials of the Sanathana Dharma and the reform party has taken the orthodox at his own word and declared that the Hindu must give up all his religion, Shastras, and gods and must reform on Western lines.

It is therefore vain for the orthodox to say that they will not change. Our social history and national traditions have all along been against the view of no-change. It is equally vain for the reformer to say that the Hindu must give up his religion and gods and Shastras, for they are the very basis of Hindu life. For good or bad it is there for thousands and thousands of years. A stream has taken its rise in the dim past where history dare not peep flowing through ages and ages of human history. Is it not madness to think of turning it back to its source ? Even if it becomes possible, that moment India will die. For, her only strength, her only vitality is in religion and spirituality. The moment she gives up these she will cease to exist. It is because of her innate spiritual strength, because of her Sanathana Dharma and the principle of Varnashrama Dharma that she has continued to live surviving all the shocks and turmoils of ages and ages and so long as she clings on to this no power under the sun can hope to dethrone her from her glory and power. Therefore all hope of Europeanising Hindu society is out of question. We will have to reform, no doubt, but that has to be done in order to bring the great and glorious spiritual, ethical, and social heritage of the nation once more with fresh vigour and purity into the every day social life, giving up the encrustations of ages and dead formulas, as did the Acharyas of yore, who clinging on to the main pivot of the national life, showed the way for any number of changes without the least fear. If the non-essentials are not changed from time to time they are positively dangerous. Our law-givers knew this and so they were bold in changing these non-essentials and we too must be bold in initiating all necessary reforms. The orthodox are not thereby going to lose their Sanathana Dharma and the reformers need not destroy the main-spring of Hindu social life in order to bring about healthy changes suited to the times.

Thus to take an example, the question of the free mingling of the sexes in India and the freedom of women. The orthodox are

terribly afraid to think of it, while the reformer wants it at any cost. What is the fear of the orthodox in this matter? That his daughter or son might lose her or his chastity and purity. That is the innate thought working in their minds. But why not our women combine the freedom of the Westerners with the chastity and purity for which the Hindu woman has lived and died? Did not Sita live in the midst of Rakshasas for months and years? Did not Savitri go from place to place in search of her mate? Did not the Brahmavadinis of old go from court to court fearlessly challenging the great savants of the time? Thus we find that the idea of freedom of women is not new to Hindu society, but then the reform party forgets that that freedom had carried with it tremendous will-power and the fire of purity and self-control nurtured in the ancient schools of Brahmacharya. Where that is absent free mingling of the sexes becomes positively dangerous, as the Western nations are slowly finding it out for themselves. And when there is this necessary safeguard you will find that no orthodox will stand against the freedom of women. Thus we find that where the ideals of the race are kept intact, we can allow all other conditions to vary as much as possible. Therefore the first duty of the reformer is to educate the women in the ideals of the race as in olden days and leave her to herself so that she may solve her own problems.

To be continued.

LIFE SKETCH OF RAMDAS

(Concluded from page 304)

By Swami Gunatitananda

Now he selected a place near Satara for his residence. It was situated on a mountain called Jaranda in a place called Mahuli near which the two rivers Krishna and Venya meet. During his stay here he would go to Mahuli for bath. After bathing he would perform Sandhya and other religious duties and then go to the neighbouring village for Madhukari Bhiksha (alms) on which he lived. In the evening he would play with boys on the river bank and return to Jaranda after sun-set. Sometimes at sun-set he would sit in meditation for hours and hours together reciting poems and devotional songs till very late in the night.

The intense life of devotion which Ramdas was now living began to draw men to him from far and wide. His lucid exposition of the austere principles of Vedanta by apt illustrations and stories from the Puranas, the Ramayana and other epics coupled with the stirring and fascinating Kirtans for which he had already earned a name during his Parivrajaka life captivated men's minds. His fame spread in all directions and many saints and Sadhus from far and wide began to flock to see him and hear him discourse on religion, and his interpretation of religion. It was at this time, during his stay at Jaranda that the well-known Saints of Maharashtra, such as Tukaram, Jairamswami, Anandamurti, Moraya, Gosavi, Dharnidhardev and Woman Pandit came to see him one after another from distant places. Ramdas had by this time made a good number of disciples among whom there were men, women, householders and Tyagis. The number of his chief disciples was Seventy-two of whom Twenty always remained with him engaged in his service.

Let us leave Ramdas here and see how Shivaji came to know of him and became his disciple. Shivaji showed signs of precocity from his very childhood. He had a religious bent of mind and was very fond of Kirtans. One day he heard a good Kirtan and was very much impressed with it. In this Kirtan the truth was proclaimed that one cannot find the real spiritual path without the help of a Guru. This set Shivaji athinking and he was ever afterwards in search of a Guru. But his search was in vain. Many were the anxious nights he thus spent when at last one night he dreamt a dream in which Goddess Bhavani appeared to him and told him that he should choose as his Guru Ramdas under whose direction his future was destined to be moulded more gloriously than ever before. He had heard of the fame of Ramdas and was but too glad that his deity had asked him to take him as his Guru. He was thinking as to how he should approach him. In the meantime the news that Shivaji had captured Torana fort (which event took place in 1645) from the Moghuls reached the ears of Ramdas who at once sent a letter to Shivaji eulogising him for his valor and exhorting him to establish in Maharashtra Dharma and free it from the clutches of the Moghuls and protect the cows and Brahmins. This letter was placed in his hands just at the opportune time when he was seriously and anxiously thinking as to how he should get at Ramdas and obtain his blessings. The letter was written in poem and at its end Ramdas asked for Shivaji's pardon for writing the

letter when they were not known to each other and added that what made him write the letter still was the political slavery of Maharashtra which day by day was becoming more and more intolerant and unbearable. There was one more point in it to which he drew the special attention of Shivaji and that was that though he was staying in his province it was inexplicable how he could not have been aware of it so long. Shivaji immediately wrote the following reply and despatched it by the same messenger who brought Ramdas's letter: "Swamiji, I am really guilty, but I know that you are forgiving. I am very glad to receive your favour and blessings. I shall shortly go to see you." Next day he started and with the help of a disciple found out the place where Ramdas was. At the sight of Ramdas he was so much moved that he burst into tears. He said, "My long cherished desire to have a Darshan (look) of you has been fulfilled today. There is one more thing which I pray you to grant me and that is initiation. Thereupon Ramdas asked Shivaji to make certain preparations necessary for initiation. Shivaji did so. He went again to Ramdas who duly initiated him. These two souls, great in their own respective spheres (one in religion and the other in politics) though unacquainted with each other before were thus united by the serene and holy bond of Guru and disciple (master and pupil). Shivaji was much struck by the spiritual glow in Ramdas's face and was reluctant to live separated from him. So he requested Ramdas to permit him to live with him and serve him all his life. To this Ramdas said "Shivaba, it is the duty of a noble warrior like you to stand by the people, free them from slavery and give them peace and happiness." Shivaji as is the characteristic of a true disciple said 'Amen' to it but begged to be taught about Self, duties of a King and duties of a warrior. Ramdas agreed to do so and composed three stanzas which contained full and clear information on these points. When Shivaji was about to take leave of his Guru, the latter gave him one cocoanut, one handful of earth, two handfuls of horse dung and four handfuls of stones as present. Shivaji received them very reverently and bowing down humbly parted from him with tears in his eyes.

Returning to his palace Shivaji narrated the above incidents to his mother who was immensely pleased to hear that her son was blessed by the famous saint. She enquired her son as to what the significance could be of the articles of Prasad which the saint conferred on him. Thereupon Shivaji explained that by them

his Guru meant to convey that he (Shivaji) should conquer a vast kingdom with a good many forts and horses. What greater glory could a mother wish for her son! Her joy knew no bounds when she heard this. Shivaji resumed his work of governing his territory but made it a point to pay a visit to Ramdas once a week, relate to him all about his doings and solicit instructions on knotty points that confronted him especially in his dealings with the Mahomedan rulers. How tactfully he administered and extended his territory, how he managed to render abortive all the plans and designs of the Mahomedans to make him a captive, how he became too strong for his enemies—so strong that they had to advance to him terms of peace—are all matters of history. The historian does not know nor has he the means to know from where Shivaji got so much wisdom, power and ability. It is only those that have a full grasp of the relation between the disciple and his Guru, it is only those that know that only the seers of Truth can have an accurate knowledge of the place and function of things in this Universe, it is only those that can realize the existence of dynamic power in saints and sages that can see and understand that the real power which Shivaji manifested was not his but that of his spiritual Guru who used him simply as a conduit through which his power flowed. Ramdas took such great interest in Shivaji that he spared no pains to remove from his mind those qualities of egotism which bring in their train one's downfall and impotency and implant in their place broad views, noble ideas, and spirit of self-sacrifice which contribute success to all undertakings, be they social, political or religious. In one word Ramdas became Shivaji's guide in all matters, and was his very soul.

One day when Shivaji was superintending the building work of the fort of Samangad he felt proud of his glory and got elated thinking it was he who employed and maintained so many workmen and supported so many disciples of Ramdas. Just then Ramdas appeared on the spot. He took Shivaji with him and went round, minutely observing how the work was going on and at the same time talking on various subjects of importance. In their round they came across in the middle of a road a big rock. Ramdas ordered it to be split into two. It was done accordingly and lo! they found a living frog in a hollow full of water. Then Ramdas said, "Shivaba, what a great king you are! Your majesty has been providing even this frog with food!" Shivaji was touched to the quick when he perceived that the remark

was directed against his foolish pride in which he was but a few moments before indulging. He at once fell at the feet of Ramdas and craved his pardon. Ramdas then composed extempore a beautiful song the purport of which is as follows: "Whose food do we eat? It is Rama that gives us food. Trees grow on the parapet; who waters them? All have seen the living frog in the broken stone. Who gave it water—there being no sea? Just see who provides the child with pure milk which it sucks from its mother's breast which is nothing but flesh and blood? There being no bubbles of water in the sky Das asks how it rains and how cultivation is helped."

One day when Ramdas was going round for alms he came to the palace gate of Raigad where Shivaji was just then residing and loudly shouted "Jai Jaya Raghuvir Samarth." Shivaji came to know that Ramdas had come to his door and wished that he should now be given a fitting present. He at once took a paper and wrote on it, "All that I have acquired up till now, I offer at your feet." He signed and stamped it with Royal Seal and put the document in the piece of cloth which Ramdas was holding out for alms. Ramdas after perusing it remarked, "Shivaba, you have given your all. What are you going to do henceforward?" The reply promptly came, "As your Holiness orders." "If so come with me for alms," said Ramdas to Shivaji who readily consented to do so. Ramdas tied his piece of cloth round Shivaji's neck and both went round throughout the city begging for alms from door to door. Then they both returned to the forest where the other disciples of Ramdas prepared meals out of the rice and other materials brought by begging. The coarse preparations were first offered to Ramdas and then shared by all. After meals Ramdas said, "Shivaba, do you see what a tasteful meal we get?" at which Shivaji though used to dainties humbly replied, "I do prefer such meals in your company and wish to serve you all the while for all the pleasures of heaven and earth."

Ramdas was struck by the simplicity and whole-hearted devotion of Shivaji who was living or could afford to live in the lap of luxury. He praised him for his temperament and said, "Shivaba, you are a Kshatriya and it is your duty to look after your kingdom. Nothing will please God so much as this duty when done selflessly for its own sake."

Shivaji in his love and admiration for Ramdas one day pressed the latter to accept a gift from him. It was the habit of

Ramdas to decline all offers of help ; but when Shivaji importuned him to accept at least some lands for the service of his favourite deity, Ramdas said "Shivaba, I do not require anything specially for myself.—What you do for the welfare of the people is itself service to me. But you may assign to me Inams in territories which are still under the domination of foreign yoke." By this he insinuated that the work of liberation which Shivaji was charged with was still incomplete. In this and various ways Ramdas was the power behind Shivaji propelling him to rid the Hindu people from the thralldom of the Moghuls and to establish the Maharashta Empire on a religious basis. It was Ramdas who suggested to Shivaji that the national flag should be of orange colour—a suggestion which was readily taken up and carried out. As a sign of the word of liberation carried on with a higher spirit of service to God, the national flag of orange colour—the sign of Tyaga or renunciation—was hoisted on the forts in Maharashtra. This served to keep up the national sentiment at a higher level of spirituality in public affairs. The old forms of salutation, were dispensed with as implying submission to the foreigner and a new form was introduced. The new form of salutation was to repeat "Ram, Ram" a form which is still adhered to and observed by the backward classes in Maharashtra. Under Ramdas's inspiration and suggestion the Mahomedan designations of appointments held by Shivaji's principal officers were changed to Sanskrit equivalents and the forms of correspondence also were greatly improved.

The idea that he should make some gift to Ramdas got such a strong hold of Shivaji's mind that about the year 1650 Shivaji erected a building at Sajjangad for Ramdas to live in. And Shivaji explained to Ramdas that it was his earnest desire to see him often and often which would not be possible unless he consented to stay in the newly erected mansion. His request was so importunate that Ramdas had to yield to Shivaji's wishes and live in it. In 1680 Shivaji died leaving Maharashtra in a peaceful and happy condition freed from the oppression and tyranny of the Moghul rule. He left behind him two sons who began to quarrel for the supremacy of the throne. Hearing this Ramdas wrote to them a very beautiful letter of advise—a translation of which is appended below :

"Always be attentive. Never waste your time in sinful deeds. Be compassionate and offer yourself at the feet of the

Lord. Take no revenge on your officers but forgive them for their negligence and let them resume their duty with joyous hearts. Set an example to others by your noble mindedness and generous behaviour. Quarrel not among yourselves; for the enemy is ever on the watch for a split among you. Let all the people join under your banner and fight with the enemies and defeat them; for thus only will your fame spread far and wide. Let the whole world stand in awe of your power. Forget and forgive. Let the firmament ring with the shouts for freedom and the masses be awakened. Let the banner of the Maharshtas flutter on every hill fort. Be courageous and aspiring. Remember your father and immortalise yourselves by sacrificing your all in all at the altar of the nation. Let Shivaji be your ideal in life. Remember his valour and endless toil. Care not for pleasure or pain; but struggle to build up an Empire. Only then will you be called a man." This letter though short and brief reveals his fiery patriotism and strong spirituality.

Ramdas though not a great Sanskrit scholar was a great writer. He had a distinct style of his own. His hand-writing was very nice. From his very childhood he had a strong and healthy frame. He was a skilful swimmer and could tame and ride a turbulent horse. He was a good preceptor too. His teachings were suited to the times he lived. In the latter part of Magh on Navami day Ramdas who knew his end was drawing near sat in front of the image of Sri Rama in a meditative posture uttered "Hara Hara" Twentyone times and lastly uttering "Sri Ram" opened his eyes and instantly fixing them on the image shuffled off his mortal coil.

The following are some of the important works he wrote; Dasbodh Ramayana, Atmaram, Advice to the Mind, Miscellaneous Abhangas etc. Of these Dasbodha and Advice to the Mind are greatly read and revered in Maharashtra.

HOW INDIA CAN REGAIN HER LOST POSITION

By S. S. Sellur, M.A., L.L.B.

* * *

On one occasion, the Swami (Vivekananda), myself and two or three other pets of his were seated in a room at the "Castle Kernan", Triplicane, Madras. Our talk turned on Japan. The Swami at once fell into a sort of reverie and said "How quickly has Japan proved to Europe what an Asiatic is capable of. At one stroke of her sword she has smashed for ever the lie—the abominable lie—of the inferiority of the Eastern to the Western. What is Japan when compared to India? But yet three-hundred millions of human beings are vegetating here like so many worms under the heels of a handful of foreigners without even realizing their own pitiful position. They never realize that India was the Queen of Asia for five thousand years and now Japan has taken her place without even a sigh escaping from them."

On hearing this outburst, every one there was visibly affected and we remained mute. He was also silent for half a minute and started again. The following is an amplified version of what he said. "Oh, how I would change all this in ten years, if only you Brahmanas did your duty. How I wish I were a Brahmana. Then I would have shown what a true Brahmana ought to do". Then turning to me he said, "The other day when I asked you to go to America, you brought in the excuse of not being a platform speaker. I know you are proud of your birth and one can always read it in your face. Of what value is your birth, if you are not prepared to discharge the duty that goes with it? Brahmanas in this country have been worshipped by all the rest for centuries. Do you know why? The latter were not such idiots as to worship them, merely because they were Brahmins. You know how far famed India has always been for her wealth, for her goods and the rest. Was not this wealth acquired by the energy, brain-power, and skill of Kshatriyas and others? The Brahmana has very little share to his credit. Does this not shew that in worldly knowledge, shrewdness, commonsense and the like, others were not unequal but superior to the Brahmanas. You see this superiority even

now. In the knowledge of Brahma Vidya were they inferior? No, never, look at the Upanishads. Swetaketu went to a Kshatriya to learn them. By far the best part of the Upanishads proceeded from the brains of the Kshatriya. You cannot therefore, attribute the position conceded to the Brahmanas to their superiority in Brahma Vidya.

But yet it is an undoubted fact that ever since Indian culture started by the Brahmana he has been given the first place in this country. You cannot account for this in anyway except by attributing it to his special function of Adhyapana or teaching. Whenever the Brahmana overlooked this fact and claimed superiority for his mere birth then was trouble. Our Vedas and Puranas tell of great feuds arising between Brahmanas and Kshatriyas. The story of Parasurama is an instance and that of Vasishta—Viswamitra rivalry is another. The Brahmana earned his high position through his function. He was entrusted with the education of the nation. He was an honorary teacher throughout. Therefore our Sastras made it a duty of every one else to look after him by free gifts. If only you did your duty as Brahmanas, India can do it in ten years what Japan did in thirty years."

Then I asked, "Is it so easy?"

"Certainly it is", he replied, "you say 'yes' and I tell you how".

On being pressed to give us his scheme, he said this:—

"The scheme is very simple. I have already said so many times that of all the countries I have seen of the world, India is the most cultured and civilized. Man to Man and Class to Class, this is undoubtedly true. We had no directors of Public Instruction, no Departments of education, and no staff of paid teachers. But yet Vedic culture was carried to every nook and corner of this vast continent. Some old Vedic text declares that a Sudra reciting Vedas should have his tongue cut. But this precept was confined to the shell of words. The substance 'which is what really counts' was made available to all. You are a Ramanuja and you claim the Tamil songs of your Alvars contain the essence of the Upanishads. Many of your Alvars were Sudras, Bedars and Pariahs. How did this occult knowledge, the Goodha Vidya reach them without being taught by

the Brahmanas? The truth is that the Brahmanas being confined by law to the profession of teaching, had to make it a life work. This led no doubt to a narrowness of outlook on their part which is responsible for their present degenerate position. But the nation had the benefit of their services to the full. Every village had its Pouranik and Joshi and even a Shastri. Every town had its Pandit. Every Pandit's house was a School and a College at once, because he took up a student at seven and sent him out into the world only after he graduated as a great Tarkik, or Vaiyakarana or Meemamsaka and so on. If the present day Brahmana, instead of running after government service and money, should stick to his function of teaching, the whole of India can be given the benefit of the new ideas of the West in a few years. I would therefore have you set an example by starting an Educational Mission of the Brahmanas on the lines of—say, the Jesuit Mission. You may adapt their rules to your wants. Take up boys at an early age and bring them up, as the old Brahmanas used to do, in strict Brahmacharya discipline. Teach them all the sciences quickly with the help of magic lanterns and other means which modern science has put in your hands. When they are sixteen or eighteen select out of them those who would be true Naishtika Brahmacharis by voluntarily electing poverty and teaching. Train up these boys in all the latest Sciences and Arts of Agriculture, Commerce, and so on which were taught in ancient times as the sixty-four Kalas and then make them members of your Mission and send them out to Villages and Talooks and Districts. In time your Mission will gradually spread over the whole country as the European Missions have done. Our masses are cultured already. What they want is modern Western ideas. Those can be taught without books as we were doing before, through Kathas and Puranas. In the West they are adopting these methods calling them University Extension Lectures. Hitherto Puranic Stories were recited in the Kathas. The great Historical Stories may be substituted to a certain extent making them as interesting as the others. Your missionaries must establish factories as European missionaries do, but work them for being handed over to the people. They must be loyal to the Indian principle of the open door and no monopoly. *

* Culled from the writer's "Education in Ancient India" Published in the Benares Hindu University Magazine for July, 1927,

NOTES AND COMMENTS

ORGANISED CHRISTIANITY A FAILURE

"The church became all-too-worldly in many respects. • •
The church adopted things all too human to divine needs. • •
The church has been strikingly backing in great leaders. • • •
The decline of religious influence is the prevalence of mediocre preaching and this in turn is due in part to the neglect of great issues." These are some of the charges levelled against the organised form of Christianity by a thoughtful writer in his "Outlook of Religion"—an article in the November issue of the *Open Court*. Says he, "The ordinary man simply does not take the church seriously, nor does he take religion as he understands it seriously. There are of course, notable exceptions, but this is the rule. The ordinary man really believes in 'human kindness large among the sons of men' and he has the feeling that the order of things cosmic to some extent sustains such values. But he finds the church inactive or hostile to his specific aspirations for a larger life. He finds the church more active in devising prohibitions than in promoting life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Consequently while a certain strain of mysticism may cause him to retain nominal relations with the church, his heart is not there. It is likewise with authors of note. Where is the modern literature of commanding importance that glorifies the institutions of religion? In vain does one search the volumes of Hardy, Shaw, Wells, Hergesheimer, Drieser and Lewis for evidence of confidence in the influence of organised religion. A frontal attack like Elmer Gantry follows a period of silent contempt as in Main Street.

"The primary assumption of the enormous number of magazine articles dealing with religion is that the church and its allied institutions are not functioning adequately, that the ointment is verily infested with pestiferous insects. The altitude of the press is distinctly not favourable to the church.

"But what is still more serious, competent, honest and devoted students of life, servants of humanity, frankly regard the church as a social problem. Witness Bertrand Russell. In London he delivers an address telling why he is not a Christian, and incidentally challenging the foundations of the old religions. Page the

whole world of humanitarian leaders, and only a small percentage will be found actively interested in organised religion." Some church-men have begun to see the defects of the present organisation and have been courageous enough to give vent to their convictions. The Bishop of Durham opined the other day that the Church of England with all other churches, was in the greatest danger of disintegration and disruption and that the majority of citizens had ceased to be Christians while on the other side of the Atlantic Bishop Manning of New York declared, "At this moment the Christian Church stands before the world disqualified for her divine post" These assertions only go to shew that Christianity as an organisation has spent its force and the hankering West looks forward today to the establishment of a new order of things.

DEVITALISING INFLUENCE OF A FOREIGN TONGUE

The sad state of our present system of education has been clearly and forcefully brought home to the readers in a thought-provoking article by Mr. P. N. Datta on "*Education,*" or *The Wasting a Nation's life and Energy*, in the December issue of the *Modern Review*. The writer has rightly pointed out that the main cause among others for this deplorable condition of the educated lies in "the pitiful waste of the life and energy of the nation in driving its youth from infancy upwards to the parrot like learning of a foreign tongue". How much this demand of a foreign language has crippled the child intellectually has been well summarised after a detailed handling of the subject in this wise. "Now," says he, "remember the language is entirely foreign to the child and has no affinity whatever with his mother tongue. He has to plod on through the spelling, the meaning of words, the different meanings of the same words and having the same sound but spelt differently and meaning of words with different affixes and prefixes. The task of learning the language is thus rendered extremely difficult and tedious. But as his medium of instruction is English and as his acquisition of any fresh knowledge depends upon the extent to which he has been able to master the language, the serious handicap of the Indian child in the race for knowledge is perfectly obvious." With what result? "The result is that he is actually acquiring very little fresh knowledge while his mental capacities are being tried to the utmost and his energies exhausted and wasted in acquiring what virtually amounts to a smattering of English which will be of very little

use to him so far as his mental culture is concerned." How does the youth then fare under the present system physically and morally? "Two of our young men out of three at the University", says he, "are suffering from some organic defect or other, and the chances of their being in sound health at the time of their leaving the University are dead against them." "That numbers of our young men, brilliant and fresh from the University and giving high promise of a bright future, often contract diseases, such as diabetes soon after entering on their professional careers and are shortly and prematurely cut off in consequence, would seem to afford evidence as to something being wrong somewhere in the state of things at the University." This is not all. His moral equipment, when he is to start life is next to nothing,—the educational machinery having never for a moment, from the entrance of the child into a High School till his leaving the University as a Master of Arts or Sciences, pretended to care for the moral side of his nature—having in fact completely ignored it throughout—he owes it to his *Alma mater* if he finds himself at the end of his University career at 25 standing completely naked and bare, that is, without any strong bias or attachment to truth, justice or fairness."

No wonder then that a section of young India have opened their eyes and have condemned this system as perpetuating slave mentality and are trying to set up a system suited to their own.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

The Mysterious Kundalini: By Vasant G. Rele. With a foreword by Sir John Woodroffe. Published By O. B. Taraporevala Sons & Co. Kitab Mahal, Bombay. Pages 112 with appendix. Price Rs. 3-8-0.

In this book the author has attempted scientific explanation of the Kundalini and the Six Chakras of the Yogic literature. He identifies the Kundalini with the right Vagus nerve, and the Six Chakras with the six plexuses of the sympathetic portion of the autonomic system. "To my mind," says the author, "Kundalini or the serpent power, as it is called, is the Vagus nerve of modern times, which supplies and controls all the important vital organs through different plexuses of the sympathetic portion of the autonomic system."

We are sorry we cannot agree with the learned author when he drags the conscious principle Kundalini, the Adya Sakti and the Six Chakras over which she rules, to the domain of matter and equates them with dead inert objects such as nerves and nerve centres. Although we are no scientists and are therefore not competent to pass our judgment on the correctness or otherwise of the workings of the nerves, we can, with some authority at least, say this much that the author's explanation of the Kundalini is quite inadequate from the orthodox point of view. For, while the Kundalini is described in the Yoga texts as a spiritual principle, the individual cosmic energy, the author brings her down making her an inert unconcious matter of the world just the opposite of what she actually is. Lacking as we are in personal experience regarding the true nature of the Kundalini, we cannot disbelieve, so far as this point is concerned, the authority of scriptures which has been even to this day substantiated by the spiritual realisation of many saints and Yogis of the land. The experience of Sri Ramprasad, is an instance in point. This poet-saint of Bengal, whose Yogic experiences were made into garlands of immortal songs by his own good self sang quite in tune with what the scriptures declare. And Sri Ramakrishna also had no two views. They realised the Kundalini as a conscious spiritual force as mentioned in the scripture. We cannot doubt their realisations simply because they cannot be brought before the ordinary human understanding like a temporal object. There are many things that cannot be explained from what may be called the scientific point of view, and yet they are ever true. In the face of such personal experiences of men of authority as stated above, we cannot accept the author's pleading for identifying the Kundalini with the Vagus nerve. Equally so his interpretation of the Six Chakras.

The writer's way of reconciling the anomaly in the singular use of the Kundalini in the Yogic scriptures and the existence of two Vagus nerves or Kundalinis, as the author puts it, in our body—(with one of which, the right Vagus, is identified the Kundalini of the Yogic literature) is indefinite and far-fetched. His observation that : " They (writers on Yoga) perhaps knew that one of the Kundalinis was not as powerful as the other or could not form connection or pierce through all the important plexuses mentioned by them" is, we are afraid, going too far

for supporting his contention. We entirely subscribe our views to the author's own argument when he says: "Want of knowledge is hardly conceivable in the face of the very accurate description of the sensory nerves" on the part of the authors of Yogic literature. Such being the case it would not be too much to expect of them a clear mention of two Kundalinis if they did find it to be so. As a matter of fact—they did not find two Kundalinis. They saw one. This is supported by the realisations of men of authority.

Nevertheless, the book has its merit too. It is the result of a sincere attempt, to explain Yoga in the light of modern science, although not properly directed. We have read the book with great interest and also to our positive benefit in certain matters. We sincerely appreciate the zeal and enthusiasm that impelled the learned author to undertake the task of writing this little treatise. The book involves hard labour, wide study and deep thinking. We recommend it for the study of those who are interested in the science of Yoga. Such enterprise is indeed admirable in these days.

1. Sri Krishna Paksham. }
2. Sri Krishna Vijayam. } Paintings.

In Water colours—Size 14 X 20. Rs. 3 each. To be had from M. S. Sarma and Sons, Art Publishers, 20, Alangatha Pillai Street, Triplicane.

Indian art still seeks for its inspiration in religion. The two paintings before us are pictures from Bhagavan Sri Krishna's life. The first painting portrays a dead of night scene. The roaring Yamuna flows. From the Yamuna banks shimmer lights through the windows of Yasoda's home, as if eagerly welcoming the coming of the Lord. And the Lord sleeps in Vasudevas precious burden on his head—and Vasudeva is seen wading through the roaring floods.

In Sri Krishna Vijayam we are in Yasoda's well-decorated bed room—Vasudeva has already reached and kept the blue baby with his golden halo beside the sleeping Yasoda. Over Yogamaya bends Vasudava about to carry her.

The pictures are quite suggestive.

NEWS AND REPORTS

SWAMI JANESWARANANDA'S ARRIVAL AT NEW YORK

Swami Jnaneswarananda who left Calcutta for New York last October, reached Boston on the 11th November and was received by Swami Akhilananda who went all the way from New York solely for the purpose. After a short happy stay at Boston, both the Swami and proceeded to New York, reaching there on the 16th. On Sunday, the 20th November, the members of the Vedanta Society of New York presented a cordial address of welcome to the new Swami. In reply he spoke a few wholesome words which were highly appreciated by his new friends. Both at Boston and New York the Swami entertained the friends and admirers of Vedanta Society with his charming at music.

ANANDA ASHRAMA

The famous Russian musical director, Leopold Stokowski of international reputation visited the Ashrama twice this year and stayed there for some time.

The summer this year has been a specially fruitful one and has resulted in the reconstitution of the Los-Angeles Vedanta centre and the establishment of a Library and a Reading Room in connection with it. Daily meetings and special meetings on every Wednesday have been conducted. On the resumption of the Los-Angeles centre Swami Paramananda delivered three public lectures in the Symphony Hall. His subjects were "Indias Gifts to the World," "The Great Yoga System of India" and "Karma and Involutionary Healing."

A NEW SRI RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAM AT RANCHI

The Ramakrishna Mission has recently started a new centre at Ranchi in a beautiful Bungalow, given away by Sreemati Indira Devi, the heiress of late Mr. Jyotirindra Nath Tagore of Calcutta. In accordance with the wish of the deceased, a Homoeopathic dispensary will be started by the Mission, where medicines and treatment to the poor Santhals would be given free. The house is situated four miles away from the town on a tableland, 2500 ft. above sea-level and commands the entire view of Ranchi. For the maintenance of the Ashram a small annual grant has also been provided. Swami Visuddhananda has been deputed by the Mission to take the charge of the Ashram and is to be assisted by another Swami in his work.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION RELIEF WORK

ACCOUNTS OF ORISSA FLOOD RELIEF WORK

(FROM 19TH SEPTEMBER TO 10TH DECEMBER, 1927.)

We beg to announce that the Ramakrishna Mission has closed its relief operations in Orissa, after giving the last distribution of rice at Hanspat on the 5th December and at Dehurda giving a distribution of blankets on the 10th December. From these two centres 1726 mds. 21 seers of rice, 191 pieces of blankets and 40 pieces of new cloths were distributed to the distressed inhabitants of 89 villages.

The accounts given below will show that the total expenditure of the work is Rs. 10,175-0-9, while we have received by donations from the public Rs. 5,961-9-6 only. So exhausting our Provident Relief Fund, which is mainly intended for emergency and for giving a start to some relief work in the beginning, we had to make an advance of Rs. 1,825-8-9 from the other funds of the Mission.

We appeal to our generous countrymen for their kind help to make up the deficit amount and also fill up the Provident Relief Fund and put us in a position to continue our work in future. Contributions may be sent to the President, Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math P. O. Dist : Howrah.

ACCOUNTS

Receipts—Received by donations Rs. 5,961-9-6. By sale proceeds of articles Rs. 148-12-3. From Ramakrishna Mission Provident Relief Fund Rs. 2,239-2-3. Advance from other funds of the Mission Rs. 1,825-8-9. Total Rs. 10,175-0-9.

Expenditure—Rice for recipients Rs. 8,714-7-6. Other food grain, 9-15-3, Sacks Rs. 96-4-0, Transit 334-4-9, Travelling 245-11-6, Equipments 69-5-0, Worker's expenses (for 9 workers) 348-7-6, Establishment 89-14-0, Stationery 12-12-6, Postage 51-9-9, Medicine 24-13-0, Blankets 166-0-3, Pecuniary help 4-7-3, Miscellaneous 7-0-6. Total Rs. 10,175-0-9.

(Sd.) SUDDHANANDA

The 19th December, 1927.

Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission.

BIRTHDAY OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

The Sixty-sixth Birthday of Srimat Swami Vivekananda comes off on the 14th of January 1928. The Anniversary will be celebrated at the Sri Ramakrishna Math, Brodies Road Mylapore, Madras, on Sunday, the 22nd inst.

BIRTHDAY OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

The Ninety-third Birthday of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna falls this year on Thursday, the 23rd of February next. The Anniversary celebration takes place at the Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras on Sunday the 26th February, 1928. Feeding of the Daridra-Narayanas will form one of the most important items of the programme on both occasions.

THE VEDANTA KESARI

"Let the lion of Vedanta roar."

"Let me tell you, strength is what we want
And the first step in getting strength is to uphold
The Upanishads and believe that 'I am the Atman'."

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

VOLUME XIV]

FEBRUARY 1928

NUMBER 10

PRAYER



ओ योनिं योनिमाचिच्छस्येको
विश्वानि रूपाणि योनीश्च सर्वाः ।
ऋषिं प्रसूतं कपिलं यस्तमग्रे
ज्ञानैर्विमर्ति जायमानं च पश्येत् ॥

व एकोऽवर्णो बहुधा शक्तियोगाद्
वर्णानेकाभिहितार्थो दधाति ।
विचैति चान्ते विश्वमादौ स देवः
स नो बुद्ध्या शुभया संयुज्जु ॥

He Who is without a second, Who rules over all causes, over all forms and germs ; Who rears the first-born and wise Hiranyagarbha with knowledge, and whom He sees while he is born ;

Himself formless but Who by His power makes different forms, and Whose motive no body knows ; from Whom comes the world in the beginning and Whither it goes in the end—may He endow us with good thoughts.

SWETASWATARA UPANISHAD.

SPIRITUAL TALKS OF SWAMI BRAHMANANDA

Q. Sir, how can we turn our mind to God?

A. By keeping company with the wise and good, by observing their daily performances and living them in your own life can you turn your mind to God. You are to imitate the ways and manners of those who have their minds turned towards Him. The great barrier that obstructs your correct vision of God is the doubts and confusions of your mind. Their nature is to haunt the mind and swing it to and fro running it after diverse objects. Remove them with the sharp sword of discrimination. If you are not able to do so by your own strength, seek the aid of those who are adept in it—the Sadhus. A beginner should sit beside holy men and listen to them with profound attention and retain their words of advice in his memory. But it does not end there; he must try to realise what he learns from them. Bear in mind that neither talk, nor learning, nor study will lead you to realisation unless they are practised in life. And their practice in life is not at all possible without Brahmacharya or absolute continence. Hence Brahmacharya is very necessary. Many attempt to realise God by studying the scriptures; but they do not know that without Brahmacharya none can decipher the spirit of the scriptures,—what to speak of realising God. For various reasons Brahmacharya is most necessary. If you have a desire to turn your mind to God and realise Him, perform spiritual practices supported on Brahmacharya. And if you are willing to read any books I would recommend to

you *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* and the like. Read and then try to realise what you come across. The more you read such books the more light you will find in them. Your knowledge of God by hearing is quite different from that acquired by practising Sadhana. And this again widely differs from the knowledge you acquire after realisation.

(To a devotee.). Do you know what Nag Mahashaya used to say? : "It is easier," said he, "to earn fame than to renounce it. And he who can renounce it is a really great man." He also said : "An anchored boat does not move forward by rowing." The meaning is this, a man whose mind is deep rooted in lust and gold cannot proceed God-ward unless he can free himself from their deluding influences through austere Sadhana. God and enjoyment cannot go together. If you want the one you are to banish the other and vice versa. Human birth is a rare privilege, and having had this, if you do not strive after God, surely you are the most unfortunate creature on earth. Your human birth then will have been in vain. Sri Sankara has said : "Human birth, desire for salvation and the company of holy men are rare things on earth. Those who are endowed with all these three are verily the most fortunate amongst men."

Q. As for the best way of directing the mind inward to God Sri Ramakrishna has prescribed occasional retirement into solitude—whether for a day or a month or for a year as opportunity may permit ; and you assign the company of the holy. Now which of the two courses are we to follow—holy company or solitude ?

A. Both are true and both are to be followed. In the primary stage all on a sudden a man should not

retire into solitude. Because it involves great danger. It has been noticed that many in their effort to cut off all human associations have gone mad. Therefore the restriction. But it is only when he has made some progress in the spiritual path that he can retire into solitude without much trouble. But you know for certain that true solitude you can find nowhere in this world. Time space and causation are but too insignificant to hold it. It is beyond mind, beyond intellect. It can be felt only in Samadhi (mystic trance). It is identical with The Most Tranquil.

THE PROBLEM OF HINDU SOCIAL REFORM

Concluded from p. 344

By Swami Iswarananda

Now to take up the question of caste to take another example. The reformer wants equalization of all castes and the orthodox are dead against it. For the method of the reform party is the destruction of the caste system by a free jumbling of all castes through inter-marriage and inter-dining. But this is not new problem to the Hindus. It was as old as the Aryan culture and civilization and the solution of the problem was known for thousands of years. The Aryan culture when it began to spread through out the land met with communities of various types and standards of culture. Either they had to be completely destroyed as the Europeans did in Australia and America in the case of the aborigines or they had to be freely admitted into the Aryan fold without any restriction. In the first case it would have been a cruelty even if it were possible, in the second alternative there was the danger of the purity of the Aryan culture itself being lost. In this dilemma the leaders of the Aryan society struck out a *via media* method known as the system of Varnas, which made room for the inclusion of all the various communities living in India and all those aliens who came pouring into the land during the later Buddhist period. As all these could not be jumbled up into one community, each was persuaded to live apart, but at the same time they were to assimilate the best of

Aryan culture in course of time, by getting enrolled into one or other of the Varnas, but not mixing up freely with other communities of the same Varna or other Varnas. Thus hundreds of these communities, coming within the fold of Hinduism, have become Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Sudras. Along with this process distinctions also naturally arose. The man of culture and ethical conduct is bound to be honoured and respected by another who has none of these. The weak bow down to the strong and the poor to the wealthy. These natural forces working in society brought about tremendous inequalities between the privileged and the not privileged. And the effort of the later Acharyas have been to bridge the gulf and bring about an equalization of all castes, but not through inter-marriage and inter-dining, but through the appropriation of the culture of the higher castes by the lower castes. The highest man in the land was the man of spiritual and ethical culture and the social standing of a community was judged by this standard and so the solution of the Acharyas was to bring up all castes to the highest level by extending to them the best Hindu culture and thus equalize them. If the Brahmin is the highest caste and represent the highest ideal, let all become Brahmans, they said: "By birth a man is a Sudra, by culture he becomes a Dwija, by study of the Vedas a Vipra and by Brahma-Jnana a Brahmana". In the Mahabharata it is held that in the beginning all were Brahmans and that by Karma and Guna was humanity split up into various Varnas and that all should again go back to the Brahman caste and the injunction is there that all should appropriate the highest ethical, spiritual and social virtues. There is no necessity for giving up any one's profession for that purpose, for in the *Gita*, Bhagawan says: "By doing one's own Dharma one attains to the highest goal". And many castes have gone up by dint of culture from a lower social status to a higher. These could not get at first chances for inter-marriage, that is why in Hindu society a Brahman, a Kshatriya, or a Vaishya of one denomination does not inter-marry or inter-dine with other communities of the same Varna. Later on these objections disappeared in many cases and by the force and virtue of culture, communities of equal standing inter-married. Prohibition of inter-marriage and inter-dining were only for such period as equality in Acharas and culture had not been established and once this was achieved the Acharyas knew that other things will come of themselves. Thus the great teachers and law givers

like Ramanuja and others worked at the basis and threw the highest ideals of the race broadcast down to the Chandalas. By this they avoided conflict and hatred between communities, while all had a chance to rise to substantial equality through Acharas and education. And this line of work will be the path of least resistance. So long as the other communities are left undisturbed any section has full liberty to adopt any measures for its self-improvement. And when real equality by education, culture, and wealth come into existence inter-marriage, inter-dining and all other things are bound to come. In the heat of the present controversy let us remember that the Vedanta, the religion proper of the Hindus, declares the innate and potential equality of all men, for in one and all is lodged the omnipresent, omnipotent, Atman, the ever pure, the ever free. Differences whether between communities or individuals are only in the manifestation; and all are bound to manifest the highest divinity in course of time. And so the Chandala of this moment is to become the Brahman of the future. Vedanta therefore advocates all measures inaugurated for raising the lowest to the highest and strikes off all fetters from the oppressed and the downtrodden. The present state of the depressed classes is due to want of sufficient application of these high ideals of religion and Sanathana Dharma and the progress of all communities will be marvellously quickened if these ideas are applied in a larger measure. The Vedantin asks: "I am a shoe maker, you may be a king. I do not know how to govern the country you do not know to make a pair of shoes. How are you superior to me? I have got the same God in me as in you. What right have you to say that all comforts and opportunities of life must be yours and none for me?" Thus Vedanta will be the greatest equalizing agency in the future scheme of society.

How is it then you may ask, that in spite of this Vedanta so much of inhuman cruelties and inequalities were perpetrated in the name of religion? The reply is that in spite of the noble intentions of the Rishis and Acharyas, there have been diabolical men, demons in the past as there are now, who have tampered with the works of these great souled ones, in the days when Sanskrit with its prestige and authority was a sealed book to the vast majority. Such rules as that molten lead should be poured into the ear of a Sudra if he hears Sanskrit could not have come from the lips of these holy men who realized the divine in all

beings. These are clearly interpolations; nay whole books have been fathered upon these men of authority, in order to gain currency and therefore such things as do harm to social life must be ruthlessly rejected. Leaving out these we have to take up the frame work, the method and the goal of their labour and fill them with details as changed circumstances demand. At the same time in order to avoid future pitfalls all attempts at laying down rules to the minutest details must be avoided. Then was an attempt in India and it is not entirely out of currency, to bind society by rules and regulations from the cradle to the grave. Every minute detail of life must be lived through rules and the laws guiding the life of the *Nivritti Marga* were imposed on men who had scarcely seen the path of *Pravritti* even. Because an ideal is great it does not mean that it is for all, without reference to his *Adhikara* or ability. Therefore society must be educated to grasp the principles which should guide their life and conduct, rather than kill it with exact formulas. Let the conduct, customs and manners adjust themselves as occasion requires and as society advances.

The underlying idea of all reform must be to make the race strong and pure by educating the people in the spiritual, ethical, and social ideals of the race, not reform of the externals and titbits of details. What is wanted is a root and branch reform. What is the use of pruning all the dried up branches in a flower garden, if you do not water it? Day after day more and more of these get dry and the plants die out. But if the plants are watered at the root we can prevent further dying up of the branches. Society too is a plant which must be nourished by the waters of pure, strong and great ideals, by positive ideas which shall nourish and invigorate it. All real reform should be therefore a feeding of the national life with the fuel it wants. Let the nation grow in its own way—who can dictate its growth to it? Therefore "growth", "evolution" rather than reform must be our watch-word. Progress can never be an isolated change, without reference to the past. Isolated changes, changes for the sake of change, are meaningless and life is too precious to be cast away in the mire of sensation. Every new change must have a unity with the past and must be rooted in the past history of the race, in order that it might be "progress" and an expression of the life within along new channels and new ways. As the Swami Vivekananda says: "All healthy changes are

the manifestations of the spiritual forces within and if these are strong and well adjusted society will arrange itself accordingly.

Fanatical reforms have only defeated their own ends and retarded progress. Before the Negroes of America were liberated by a violent cutting of the knot in the American civil war, they were somebody's property and they were looked after by their owners at least for their selfish purposes. Now they are nobody's and any white man in America is free to lynch a Negro for the slightest offence without being punished by the magisterial authorities who are his own kith and kin. In India the complaint is often heard that the free mingling of the sexes under the civilized regime has very often given opportunities for license. That is danger of fanaticism and unless we avoid it we will while escaping from one evil fall into another.

Evils exist in all societies in one form or another. "If in India the earth is soaked with the widows' tears, in the West the sky is rent with the signs of the unmarried." Here there is the oppression of the caste of culture over the uncultured masses, in the West the poor are ground by the rich. Social evils are chronic, they are never completely cured. If it is solved in one form, it manifests in another form. It is good not to forget that as long as good exists so long there will be evil as well. The hope of millineium might be a good driving power for working against evils, but after all history teaches that the world is not a bit happier in spite of all the reform of evils. Therefore nothing is to be gained by being fanatic over forms and externals. If real remedy is to come it can come only by the reform of the whole mass.

And lastly we have to remember that the leaders of the Hindu society in the past were Rishis, men who having realized the goal of life themselves, were fully qualified to guide society along safe paths. They knew the end and purpose of human evolution and the laws of this evolution and so they had definite aims and ideals in their scheme of reforms, whereas the present day reforms are mostly guided by men whose judgments are based on the likes and dislikes of the Westerner, whose approval and patronage are of greater value to them, than the abiding interest of their own race. And further the Rishis were men of character, purity, truthfulness, sincerity, unselfishness, and love as are fit to lead society in any age or clime and we too if we want to reform society and make any abiding influence on it will have to be like them.

STORY OF SRI SANKARACHARYA'S LIFE

(CHILDHOOD)

By Swami Atulananda

Some twelve centuries after the advent of Lord Buddha the spiritual condition in India, the land of his birth, was deplorable, indeed. The country was still under the sway of Buddhism, but it was Buddhism far removed from the pure Dharma taught by the Lord himself. The country had become thoroughly corrupted. The masses were ignorant and superstitious; the priests, under the garb of religion, were given to heinous practices. It came to such a pass that the gods in heaven wept for humanity. They approached Mahadeva, the Lord of gods, and implored him to take human birth once again to save the world from destruction.

Mahadeva, the merciful, heard their supplications. As a current of air he entered into the womb of Vishistha, a pure and pious Brahmin woman, then at prayer before his image in a temple in South India. In course of time the lady Vishistha was delivered of a beautiful boy. She named him Sankara.

About the same time, in different parts of India, lesser gods also took human birth to assist Mahadeva in his great undertaking of restoring truth and righteousness on earth. These gods we will meet later on as Sankara's chosen disciples.

When he was three years old Sankara lost his father, and it was left to Vishistha to raise the child. This she did with great love and wisdom.

Marvellous stories are told about the precocious boy. When only a year old he knew the letters of the alphabet; in his second year he learned to read; and when he was three years old he knew parts of the scriptures by heart. Now he would sometimes utter words far beyond the comprehension of the simple village folk. And when his mother pondered over the significance of these utterances others would laugh and tell her not to heed the prattle of a little child.

Miracles are related from even an early date in the child's life. It happened one day—Sankara was then seven years old—that his mother, already advanced in years and feeble, on her

way to the river for her daily bath, fainted from weakness. The child found her, and called for assistance. With great difficulty the old lady was brought to her home. But now she felt very unhappy, indeed, for no longer was she able to go to the distance and take her ceremonial bath in the sacred stream.

Sankara could not bear to see his mother grieved. Drawing very close he tried to console her. But it was of no avail. Then he prayed fervently that the Lord might comfort her, and behold! The Lord being pleased with the boy's earnestness and faith, and his great love for his mother, spoke in a whispering voice, "Go, and call the river to follow you to your home."

The boy obeyed, and stretching out his little hands, called as loud as he could, "Oh Mother Ganges," follow me and come to our house, that mother may bathe in your holy waters!" At once the river left her bed and running up the bank, followed the boy. From that day the river flowed by the house, and the lady Vishistha could again take her sanctifying baths. With palms joined she could pray again, "Oh Mother! Holy Current! Merciful One! Make me pure, wash away my sins with your immortal waters."

Now it is written that the boy Sankara secretly came to know, that wise men had examined his horoscope, and that according to their reading two paths were open to him. Should he choose to live a worldly life he would pass away before he reached maturity, but should he decide to renounce the world, even in childhood, and devote himself to the service of God and humanity, his life would be prolonged, and he would do great good to the world.

Strange to relate, when he was only eight years old, this exceptional child was possessed with an irresistible urge to leave the world and live a godly life. He knew it would pain his mother, but he had to choose between her and God. So on different occasions, to her utter consternation, he would plead with his mother to allow him to depart from the house and become a Sannyasin, or wandering monk.

But which mother can give up her only boy and allow him to wander away from her, especially at such a tender age? She

* Sacred streams in India, though they bear different names, are often addressed as "Mother Ganga."

would not hear of it, and she met his repeated requests with tears and lamentations. "When you grow up," she said, "you may become a monk."

"But, mother, it has been thus ordained from above," was all the boy could plead. "It is God's will." As her only reply, Vishistha wept. Sankara confounded by his mother's attitude sought refuge in the Lord. "Oh Lord," was now his constant prayer, "make it possible for me to do Thy work."

One day, seated on the bank of the river, the boy thought, "If I want to become a Sannyasin I must get rid of worldly desires". And at once he ordered these desires to leave him. The desires, thus commanded, fled and entered into the body of a crocodile near by, in the river. Then Sankara himself plunged into the stream. Now he began to cry out loudly, "Help! Help! a crocodile is chasing me!"

Old Vishistha hearing the cry came hurrying towards the river, and seeing her son in danger, was about to jump into the water, when Sankara called to her, "Don't come, mother! Save me by allowing me to take Sannyasa! Save me! The crocodile is coming! Give your consent! If you allow me to become a monk the crocodile will go away!"

Vishistha intent on saving her son, cried, "Come my child; I consent; Come to your mother!" Immediately the crocodile disappeared, and the boy was saved.

Shortly after, Sankara set out on his wanderings. First he went in search of a Guru who would initiate him in the holy order of Sannyasa. He came to the Narmada river, and on the bank of the stream he saw a beautiful Ashrama. Everything looked quiet and serene. The trees were laden with fruits, and flowers bloomed in abundance.

Entering the place he saw a Yogi in deep meditation. Struck with admiration for the holy man, he softly and reverently approached him. Watching the silent figure, seated upright features serene, eyes closed, the body steady like a rock, Sankara thought that the noise of the river tumbling over rocks and boulders might disturb the Yogi's meditation. So he ran to the river, and in a loud voice commanded her to stop her noise. But the river danced along, as merrily and noisy as ever. Then, Sankara with his whole mind fixed on the Yogi, ordered the river to enter into his Kamandalu (water pot). Thus the entire stream was caught in a little water pot, and there was perfect silence.

When the Yogi at last opened his eyes, Sankara approaching him with folded hands, said, "Holy sir, long have I searched for one who could show me the way to freedom. At last I have found you. Be kind to me and accept me as your disciple." The Yogi asked, "Who are you? You seem very young to apply for initiation." Then Sankara replied with a clear voice, full of conviction, "I am neither a boy nor a man, neither a girl nor a woman. I am not the body. I am the Atman, the Spirit Divine." The Yogi (Govindapada was his name) pleased with the reply, blessed Sankara, and accepted him as his disciple.

Now when Sankara had imprisoned the river in his Kamandalu, the water creatures left in the dry river bed, were in great distress. They wept and cried for the river. Govindapada hearing their cries, called Sankara, and said, "My boy, I do not hear the sweet music of the Narmada river, I hear only the cries of fishes and other creatures. Go, and release the river, that all may be happy again." Then Sankara opening his Kamandalu let the river flow out. And the Narmada danced and sang as before and the fishes were happy and silent.

Govindapada observing all that had happened, was elated. "My son," he addressed Sankara, "you have come at last. Long have I waited, and as I was advancing in years, sometimes I feared that the words of the Devas would prove false. For it was told me that a boy would come to me who would imprison the river in his Kamandalu, and that that boy would become my disciple and would restore religion to its former purity. That boy you are. You are enlightened, you are free. But a slight covering of Maya obscures your vision. Otherwise, how could you live in this world and fulfil your mission? God, Himself, has placed it there. Come, I will now properly initiate you, and then we will together go to Benares. In that sacred place I will give up my body. In Samadhi my soul will enter the One Great Existence and you will begin your mission. You will expound the holy Vedas, and you will write their commentaries. The world will marvel at the power of your intellect. Take this staff, and with it travel all over India. As Mahavakya (The great Mantram) I give you 'Tatwamasi,' 'Thou art That.' With it always in mind conquer the world for religion."

While at Benares, Sankara, one day remembering his high birth as a Brahmin, allowed pride to enter his heart. Then the Lord, to protect His devotee, taught him a lesson. So when

Sankara the following morning returned from his purifying bath in the Ganges, the Lord Himself, in the guise of a low-caste man, stepped in his way.

Sankara, the high-caste Brahmin, told the low-caste to get out of his way, and to be careful not to defile him with his touch, for should he touch him, Sankara would have to purify himself again by another bath in the sacred river. At this, the low-caste laughed, and calling his dogs, (also impure creatures), obstructed Sankara's way. Sankara was furious. But the low-caste makes fun of him, and then says to his dogs, "You have more brains than that proud Brahmin. He sees only the body. He does not seem to know that the soul is beyond caste, and is one and the same in all beings. He utters the highest teachings of Vedanta, but in his life he does not demonstrate these truths. I spit on his Brahminhood and learning."

Sankara, hearing this, marvels, "What does it mean? These are not the words of an ignorant low-caste man. Such words can come only from a knower of Brahman, from one who knows the true nature of the Soul. Surely, this lowly form conceals a great being." Prostrating, he prays, "Oh Lord, do not deceive me. Reveal Thyself to me."

Then his eyes are opened. The low-caste has vanished, and before him stands a Being of celestial glory. And the dogs are transformed to Devas. And a voice speaks softly, "My child, never be proud of birth or learning. He who with heart and soul humbly worships Me, he is My beloved devotee." It was a lesson that Sankara never forgot.

At Benares, Sankara met his first disciple. A youth, named Sanandan, travelling far and wide in search of a Guru, at last came to the Holy City. There, day and night, in a loud voice, he called on Viswanath, the Lord of the Universe, to lead him to a Guru who would liberate him from the bondage of this world, and help him towards God-realization.

Sankara saw the youth, and struck with his sincerity, halted and spoke to him. Then, in a flash, the youth's past, present and future states of mind were revealed to him. Sanandan, he saw, would be one of his most faithful followers. He embraced the boy and said, "Come, the world needs us. Follow me, I accept you as my disciple."

The youth was wonder-struck. He jumped to his feet. No doubt, the Lord had heard his prayer. His Guru had come.

Falling at Sankara's feet he offered himself heart and soul to his new master.

The life of this first disciple makes a wonderful story. He was Guru-Bhakti personified. In his life was actually seen that true love for the Guru is a means to liberation. In the scriptures it is written that "Without reading even a single Veda the Guru-Bhakta will know all Vedas." In Sanandan's life this was shown to be true. It was his greatest delight to serve his Guru. This he considered his highest duty, his religion.

Sankara was highly pleased with Sanandan, and showed him many favours. This, the other disciples could not understand. They called Sanandan an ignorant fellow because he did not study as they did. They wondered why Sankara loved him so much, for he did not even perform the religious duties which they themselves so carefully observed. Sanandan was only serving and slaving for his master. How could he learn anything that way? But Sankara understood the nature of his disciple.

Once it happened that Sankara being in need of something, as usual, called for Sanandan. The youth, however, did not come. Sankara was surprised. He asked the other disciples where Sanandan might be. They replied that he had gone to the other side of the river to perform some duty, and that probably he had not yet been able to secure a boat to take him back.

Sankara went to the river, and called loudly. This time Sanandan heard the call, and he ran towards the river. But there was no boat to take him across, and the current was swift. What to do? His beloved master was calling, he must be in need of him. He must go at once. Then he thought, "He who is able to take me safely across the rough ocean of life, would he not be able to take me across this river?" Placing his feet upon the water he found that he did not sink down. The river supported him. Wherever he put his feet, lotus flowers appeared to hold him up. Thus he reached his master.

Sankara blessed him, and said, "Sanandan, from this day I name you Padmapada, the lotus-footed." The other disciples seeing all this, now understood the greatness of this unread unsophisticated, hard working fellow-disciple. They saw the power of Guru-Bhakti.

(To be Continued)

THE SOUL OF INDIA

By Prof. P. N. Srinivasachariar, M. A.

The soul of a nation is its inner life and genius expressing itself in its manifold activities, and imparting its peculiar meaning to them. Each nation develops a *Svadharma* along the lines of its individuality, and contributes its share to the soul of the universe, like a facet in a precious gem. A cultural hothouse is opposed to the laws of continuity. India is the symbol of soul power and *Santi*. She stands for spiritual unity and synthetic vision. Brute force works by terrorism and cowardice, and breeds bitterness, but India knows the art of transmuting such force into a beneficent and redemptive activity. The heart of India lies in her capacity for harmonizing differences. In assimilating alien cultures and absorbing whatever is true and good in them, India is as free and fresh to day, as she was in the beginningless dawn of her civilization. She has suffered from infinite hazards and hardships, and still her staying and sustaining power is amazing; she stands deathless, and soars to the Heavens with her Himalayan serenity, and vivifies the world with her Gange'ric goodness and love.

It is the innate aspiration of India to realize the unity of things. The bewildering variety presented by Modern India in all aspects of life sometimes fills the best of us with doubt and despair. But the infinity of the details and the differences that divide us is the very argument that suggests their underlying unity. Other countries are interested in standardizing life and establishing uniformity. But such a course is neither possible, nor practicable in India. She has a magical power of her own, by which she converts mechanism into spirituality, and machine guns into messengers of peace. The soul of India is eternal. India feels, wills, and thinks, and is really spiritual. This five-fold truth is enshrined respectively in her science, art, ethics, philosophy, and religion and illustrated in the lives of her heroes. If the permanency of a civilization is to be tested by its inherent capacity to produce poets and philosophers, and sages and saints from all ranks of society, then India is the only *Punya Bhumi* that satisfies this condition, and maintains the dignity of perpetual youth and motherhood. It is a false notion that she is stagnant and sterile in the present age, and it is dispelled by the very

mention of her five typical sons, J. C. Bose, Rabindranath Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi, Swami Vivekananda, and Sri Ramakrishna. The spirit of her synthetic vision is incarnate in their respective messages of the five noble principles, viz, the unity of life, beauty, love, truth and religion. We may state their messages more or less in their own inimitable words.

Mr. Bose brings out the ultimate unity of all scientific endeavour. Science seeks the one in the many, and sees the same truth in Physics, Physiology, and Psychology. There is the same march of law in the living and the non-living. There is really no barrier or boundary line between the realms of life and matter. The metals, the plants, and the animals give the same answers to the same questions. Their responses and reactions are similar, and they exhibit the same phenomena of fatigue and exaltation under stimulants. Drugs and other irritants depress or facilitate their growth. In these mute companions there is the same tremulousness and death spasm, like the thrills of life, there is such a thing as the throb of things. Nature is as much awake in the lowest things, as she is in the highest thought. The difference is only in the degree of evolution. Inorganic matter is not really inert, or indifferent to the demands of life. It has the potency and promise of inner growth. It responds to the external stimulus like the living germs and irritable like them. Metals for example may be killed by means of poison. Likewise though apparently passive, the plant responds to the stimulus like the animal. The stimuli may come from contact, gravity, temperature, or light. But in all cases it is sensitive to shocks and stimulation. Alcohol increases excitability for a while, and chloroform kills the plant. The plant has the power of movement and a beating tissue resembling the heart. The flow of the sap is its circulation of blood, and it can be depressed or stimulated by the agent. The plant is provided with a nervous tissue, and there are sensory and motor impulses to and from the executive centre. In this way it perceives changes in the environment, and executes movements in response to them. The dying plant exhibits signs of death. Thus we see the essential unity in the responsivity of the living and the non-living. Their inner life, growth, and death are governed by the same laws. In the sap and the sensations there is the same surging of life, and the seeking after the One. The tremour of plant life is not merely transmitted but gets transformed into the soul of man. Life incarnates in the metal, and gets immortal in the man. Thus India with her pecu-

liar spiritual habit sees truth face to face, and witnesses the victory of co-operation over competition.

The poetic spirit of Modern India finds its fullest expression in the life and message of Rabindranath. The poet does not infer truth, but has a direct intuition of the wholeness and harmony of things. He has the 'vision and faculty Divine', by which he reaches the soul of goodness in things evil. Art releases us from the routine of life, and reveals the inner joy of creation. Western thought reduces man to a machine, and dissects spiritual unity to mere physical units. It is no profit to triumph over external nature, and be tyrannised by the passions that rage from within. Mechanism and mammon-worship only end in compartmental views and cut-throat competition. Culture is opposed to Krupp guns. The world is not a dead machine, but a living whole. But all this does mean that India should return to the past, or take to other worldliness. A slavish clinging to the past is as fatal to growth as the spirit of modernizing. Free nationalism should be expansive and not exclusive. Indian culture was born in the forest, and is expansive, but western culture was born in the city, and therefore exclusive. Nature is not hostile, or alien to the aspirations of man. Separating man and nature is like dividing the bud and the blossom. The poet seizes the beauty that is in nature internal and external, and loses himself in the rapture of that communion. The same spirit shines in the stars above and the soul within. God is not a Being who is beyond the universe, but is immanent in it as the life of its life. The Infinite is realised in the finite. The world is a witness to His living presence. It vibrates with the joy of sharing in the Eternal and becoming one with it. The world song cannot be separated from the Eternal Singer. Other worldliness is as harmful to spiritual growth as sense enjoyment. The body is not to be starved and slain; it is really a gateway to God. The flower that comes from the dust is offered to the Deity. Life is to be spiritualised, and dedicated to love and service. To the seer, death belongs to life as much as birth. The child cries out when the mother takes it away from the right breast, but in the next moment it has its consolation in the left. Death is but a renewal of life. Sorrow and suffering have a purifying effect on the soul. True blessedness consists in shifting the centre from the self to God, and being lost in the bliss of Divine communion.

Mahatma Gandhi is the embodiment of the moral purity and power of modern India. He is a *tapasvin* who has an immortal

faith in self-purification and love, and a *karma yogin* that seeks salvation through incessant toil in the service of humanity. To him politics and economics without a religious motive is like a death-trap that kills the soul. The meaning of moral genius is summed up in the word *t-a-p-a-s-v-i-n*, which may be regarded as the *astakshara* of morality. (1) Truth is no expediency; it has intrinsic and absolute value. (2) *Ahimsa* is self-suffering even unto death, and consists in the conquest of tyranny by love. (3) In the process of self-purification the control of the Palate and the Passion is indispensable. (4) *Abhaya* or fearlessness arises from the sense of identifying oneself with the eternal Self that is the rock of ages and courting even imprisonment and death in the pursuit of truth. (5) Swadhesism is the practice of Svadharma in the economic life. There is a vital relation between the supreme Good and the economic goods. Economics that hurts morality is unmoral and sinful. The spinning wheel is the left lung of India and having lost it we suffer from palloping consumption. Mills cannot grow like mushrooms. Khaddar has a soul about it, which the mill has not. The spinning wheel sings the joy of freedom and spells an equitable distribution of wealth. It is the only solution of the chronic poverty of the millions of India's Daridra-narayanas. (6) Vernacularization does justice to the unity of Indian thought and language, and Hindi alone can be the *Lingua franca* of India without in any way affecting the growth of other languages. (7) Non-thieving is the practice of simplicity and contentment. It is immoral for a man to own more than what is needed for his life.

Ahimsa is the key to conduct and universal harmony, and sums up the moral code of the Mahatma. Violence is the law of the brute. It starts with blind fury, and ends in retaliation. Evil is sterile and self-destructive. It maintains itself by the implication of good that it contains. Evil is never overcome through evil; ceases only through good. Self-purification comes through suffering woes and forgetting wrongs. It is by self-suffering that we wean the wicked man from his career of crime, and thus release the forces of peace and good-will. Non-violence is no passive acquiescence or harmlessness, but a positive resistance of evil, in which the whole soul ranges itself against wickedness. The *Gita* is the gospel of fight between good and evil, and symbolises the duel that goes on in our hearts. But in resisting the evil we do not hate the evil-doer. By doing good to him, we redeem him, and efface the evil itself. Non-violence is solid but

silent self-sacrifice, and is no bluff or bluster. It is thus the basic truth of Hinduism. It is the reliance on God who is the rock of ages with a humble and contrite heart, and it insists on the absolute absence of ill-will against all that lives including the sub-human species. The cow is a poem of pity, and by protecting the cow we protect the whole dump creation of God, of which it is the symbol. Untouchability is the excrescence of Hinduism and the device of Satan. It is an age-long curse, a crime against humanity and the greatest blot on Hinduism, for which there is no Sastraic sanction at all. Its nemesis is seen in our being treated as social lepers in western society. The Daridranarayanas are really our blood brothers. The Mahatma justifies the principle of *Varnasrama* as a social order based on self-restraint and division of duties, but is entirely opposed to its modern practice rooted in prestige and privilege. He proclaims the all-inclusive character of Hinduism.

Swami Vivekananda, the apostle of modern Hindu thought, accepts the challenge of the west, establishes the universality of *Vedanta*, and invites the world to share in its innate hospitality. The *Vedas* embody the eternal truths of spiritual life, and form the fountain from which the founders of religions draw their inspiration. The sacred books of the world are but pages in the reading of the Infinite, and God's book is not yet finished. The theme of the *Vedanta* is the discovery of the One without a second, which exists by itself, and explains all things. It recognises the play of the Infinite in the finite, and insists on the solidarity of human life. The Infinite is not in the muscle or the machine, but is the eternal *Atman* by knowing which everything else is known. Religion is not in dogma or doctrines but in the realisation of the *Atman*. The *Vedanta* begins with the external and the personal, and ends with the internal and the impersonal. It is a progress from truth to higher truth, till the highest is realised. To the Swami the *Adwaita* is the highest reading of the absolute. The *Vedanta* teaches the infinity of man. Men are not weaklings born in sin and suffering, but are the children of immortal bliss. The oneness of *Atman* is the eternal sanction of morality, and provides for true brotherhood and love. The theory of *Ishtam* affords the fullest and freest scope for the choice of one's religion. The idea of renunciation is the very basis of Vedantic experience. The West tries to solve the problem of 'on how much a man can live' but the East 'on how little a man can live'. India really lives in the cottages and the Daridranara-

yanas. Don't-touchism must go, and the down-trodden masses should be rescued from poverty and illiteracy, and become alive to their Vedantic strength. India should preserve the Hindu soul and the Mahomedan body. The central truth of Hinduism is the ancient teaching that what exists is One, though the sages call it variously. It comes down through the ages, and is mingled in our blood. Philosophies are not contradictory, but only complementary, and *Dvaita* is as much a part and parcel of the Vedanta as *Advaita*. Sects may multiply, but sectarianism should go. Hinduism as an all-comprehensive religion based on rationality and synthetic insight accepts and absorbs whatever is good in other religions, and has the highest claim to universality.

The religious spirit of Modern India becomes fully alive in Sri Ramakrishna. His life affords the most inspiring illustration in modern times of the manifold ways, in which the mystic experiences God. He summed up in his life the strivings of every sect and religion, and discovered, by his synthetic intuitions their underlying harmony. He was like a honey bee, gathering and drinking the Divine nectar that is concealed in the creeds of the world. Religion is one, but religions are the varied expressions of the same truth. Like the radii of a circle, all religions radiate from and converge to the same spiritual centre. Religion is the science of specializing in God. Sri Ramakrishna had an irrepressible craving for God in all His manifold forms, and his varied *Sadhanas* reveal the intensity to his spiritual yearning. His whole being hungered for God, and those who are mystically inclined can alone have a glimpse of his spiritual restlessness and agony. When the spiritual storm raged over his body, even the senses would swoon away, and stop functioning. To abolish the idea of sex he would actually worship all women as the manifestations of the Divine Mother. His body would recoil from contact with sense values, as naturally as it would respond to the Divine call. To get rid of the idea of status he would wash unclean places like a sweeper. For days together he would sit like a statue absorbed in *Samadhi*. As the result of his unique *Sadhanas* he was blessed with a variety of Divine visions including Islamic and Christian experiences. To Sri Ramakrishna God is both personal and impersonal, and the founder of every religion is an incarnation of the same Universal spirit. Religion is not in the realm of rituals and books, but is a direct experience of God. The four *yogas* are different roads to the same goal. The starting points

may vary. The *gnani* has an intellectual bent, but the *Bhakta* is drawn by emotion; the *karma yogin* has an active temperament, and the *Yogi* is for self-control and *Samadhi*, but the goal of all is the same; it is God-realisation. There is no need for criticism, conversion, and cruelty. The Allah of Islam and the Father in Heaven of Christianity are the same as Brahman.

The abiding faith of India in synthetic unity is thus realised in the deeper life of her great heroes. A Bose sees the whole universe pulsating with the life of God. The art genius of India discovers the underlying harmony and wholeness of things. Her moral spirit incarnates in a Gandhi, and restates her gospel of enthroning love in the heart of all beings. Her Swamis proclaim to the ends of the world her message of God in all faiths and philosophies. But it is in her sages and saints that the spirit of India finds its highest fulfilment. Thus we see that synthesis and *santi* are the soul of India. The Indian inherits 'the idea of the ultimate and the universal that is behind the particulars'. The threads of different cultures and creeds are woven into a fabric, and worn by the Mother. The details furnished by experience form the food of the synthetic mind. The Indian mind is cultural and not credal. True culture is neither insular nor exclusive, but it is expansive and international. Indian genius is not confined to the country, but it really belongs to the world. The best Indians are the most impersonal, and yet they do not sacrifice their individuality. India has faith not in conquest and conversion, but in peaceful invasion into the domain of alien cultures, and absorbing them by her aggressive love. Her Asokas, Akbars, and Shivajis were interested more in cultural appreciation than in mere militant annexation, and their faith was rooted in unity and not in uniformity. India is today the battle ground of the creeds, the cultures, and the communal feelings of the world and India alone has the power to harmonise these differences. She alone of all the nations has the tradition and opportunity of realising the ideals of the solidarity of man and the fraternity of faiths.*

* From the Pachaiyappa's College Magazine, Madras.

EDITORIAL NOTES

Neglect of the Masses

An impartial observer of the various meetings and conferences that are being held in the country from time to time, cannot but feel that the interests of the masses have not received the attention they deserve. To the humble worker toiling in the remote village farm, as well as to the ordinary labourer on the streets of the city, such gatherings seem to have very little meaning. When told of these, the poor ryot asks vacantly how they are going to help him to solve the momentous problems that face him most grimly. He has in fact not much enthusiasm for these activities of the educated classes. The city bred intellectual again, does not feel any enthusiasm even for the many things which the illiterate country folk value and revere. The village fairs and pilgrimages, rural feasts and sports eagerly looked forward to by our so-called rustic brethren have lost all meaning to our present day educated classes. The writer, had the chance of witnessing recently a local festival in a mofussil town. On that occasion thousands of labourers and farmers gathered together, forming numerous parties and processions, to bid farewell to the Goddess of Cholera, and the roads were impassable even for pedestrians. But strange to say, the town hall, the tennis courts and other resorts of the intellectual people looked quite busy and active. Even many of the upper class men did not seem to be aware of the significance of the festival, and those who knew could scarcely disguise their contempt for the feelings and sentiments that drew the vast gathering. Hence it is that our upper classes have not as yet succeeded in touching the hearts of the vast majority of the labouring masses, who even sometimes look upon them with suspicion.

Need for Active Sympathy

It is impossible to emphasise too strongly this want of sympathy and co-operation on the part of the people who are comparatively better off in society. Some of our national and communal movements have begun to approach the masses. But they do this not so much for taking interest in questions vital to the people as for securing votes for the party candidates. The poor labourer in rural areas, however, is quite unconcerned as to the success or failure of any particular candidate's contesting

seats in the Legislative Council or local bodies. Previously he might have entertained some hopes for a better prospect from the "vote seekers" and their agents, who were profuse in their promises. But now after his repeated disillusionments, he has come to know that whoever might succeed, he will have all the same to toil day and night without being able to earn a living wage to feed himself and his family. The masses cannot be blamed for this mentality for except Mahatma Gandhi's khadi movement no constructive programme has been taken up to mitigate the grinding poverty of the teeming millions of India. However little might have been the actual work done, the need for bettering the condition of the poor seems to be gradually engaging the attention of the political and social workers in the land. By way of illustration we may refer to the speech of the Chairman of the Reception Committee of the last Congress held in Madras—"There is the most urgent need for the propagation of higher economic ideals in the country. The workers of the Congress should carry to the ryots not only a political but also an economic message. The cultivator should be familiarised with the modern methods of agriculture and with the immense usefulness of the co-operative movement. Vast tracts of land may be cultivated, and the wealth of the country enormously increased if only our ryots will understand and use the modern methods of agriculture." We are not aware if any definite action has been taken up on the lines suggested above.

The Condition of the Masses

The indifferent attitude of the higher classes towards the common people is slowly undergoing a welcome change. This is further borne out by the fact that the president of the Indian National Congress also did not fail to make a reference to the miserable lot of our toiling masses in his address—"The general economic condition of the workers in the fields and factories, who between themselves constitute more than three-fourths of the total population of the country, is such that it is with difficulty that they can keep body and soul together. They are over-worked and under-paid, ill-fed, ill-clothed and badly-housed. Their power of resistance to disease is so low that they fall easy victims to the ravages of epidemics. Cholera plague, influenza, small-pox and malaria claim their heavy toll of millions year after year." Indeed, the condition of the poor in

the village is pitiable. The vast majority of the poor classes in India do not get a square meal a day. Ill-fed and ill-clad the poor has, besides, to live in an atmosphere of constant fear. The village priest, the evil-spirits, the landlord, the police, the money lender—all these threaten him at every step. The fear does not kill him, if it did there would have been some solace. It paralyses, brutalises, takes humanity out of him. Before we talk of rural sanitation, Co-operative societies, improved methods of agriculture, village schools and the like—these are the usual remedies suggested for rural re-construction—we have to see that this demon of fear is exercised, and the people are made to feel that they too are men in the midst of men. Speaking of the problem of the masses says Swami Vivekananda, “The poor, the low, the sinner in India have no friends, no help; they cannot rise try however they may. They sink lower and lower every day, they feel the blows showering upon them by a cruel society, and they do not know whence the blow comes. They have forgotten that they too are men and the result is slavery. * * * * No amount of politics would be of any avail until the masses in India are once more well educated, well fed and well cared for. * * * * Therefore I say, set yourselves to the task of spreading education among the masses. Tell them and make them understand, ‘You are our brothers—a part and parcel of our bodies and we love you and never hate you.’ If they receive this sympathy from you their enthusiasm for work will be increased a hundred fold.” The first thing to do then is to awaken the best individuality ruthlessly suppressed by poverty, oppression and fear.

The Plan of Work

Although this message was delivered to the people of India more than thirty years ago, so far it has not sufficiently attracted the notice and attention of those for whom it was meant. It is a truism that man cannot be made virtuous by an Act of Parliament; similarly we cannot make our masses manly and self-reliant by paper schemes and resolutions. It appears to us that the work among the masses should not be mixed up with party politics. It is not necessary that every village worker should become a Sannyasin; but it is highly essential that he should be a man of true self-sacrifice, and should not be subject to the shifting and exciting influence of party ambitions and schisms. In our opinion the most practical and beneficial khaddar movement might have had greater success if only it had begun free from all political bias and associations. The same is true of the

question of temperance or elevation of the depressed classes. In spite of some laudable attempt in the direction of focussing public opinion regarding the methods of work for village reconstruction and economic improvement of the masses, we have not yet succeeded in rousing sufficient interest in ourselves and our countrymen as to any comprehensive and practical scheme of work. The various Social Service Leagues, the Depressed Classes' Missions, The Servants of India Society, The Young Men's Christian Association, The Salvation Army, The Rama-krishna Mission and other associations have all to their credit, some notable achievements, and what is still more valuable, practical experience gained in the course of their actual work. It strikes us as a very desirable step towards the solution of the problem, if all the organizations could upon a common platform, free from all bias and controversial atmosphere, exchange their thoughts and experiences, and help to evolve a common and concerted plan of action.

Immensity of the Task

The picture of the poor villagers is really staggering. The toiler is not only too poor in his material resources but his health also is very miserable and vitality, very low. His ignorance of the most elementary principles of sanitation and hygiene is simply abysmal. Further he does not even get employment for many months in the year. He sells his produce, if he has anything to sell in the cheapest market, and purchases even his necessities in the dearest market. It is no exaggeration to say he is on all sides mercilessly exploited by others. The benefits of co-operative movement do not reach him. The improved methods of agriculture also are of no avail to the vast majority of our landless and helpless labourers. The existing organizations for moral improvement even if multiplied a hundredfold, would be inadequate and unequal to the task. We have so much unemployment in our land especially among the educated middle classes. Is it not for our political leaders and social workers to devise ways and means of utilising them and put them to some practical work of village improvement ?

The Thing Needed

What we want is an All-India organization, which will have nothing to do with either political or communal quarrels, and will confine its activities purely to educational, economic and sanitary problems. It must be capable of getting the active

sympathy and support of the State and of all philanthropic organizations in the land. It is not possible for any single individual or society to lay out a cut and dry plan of work for the whole country. All the various associations already engaged in such a work can alone devise some definite scheme as suggested above. If they could work in co-operation with the local bodies in some branches of the village work and get substantial support from the State, great progress could be made within a comparatively short time. But in the present unsettled atmosphere it is not possible to expect any such happy consummation. Still serious attempts should be made by all well-wishers of the country to explore the possible means of co-operating with one another for the achievement of common ends.

Training and Organization

We are living in an age of technical skill and organization. Many of our natural ills may be traced to a lack of co-ordination of our wills. So long as we remain in the "disunion stage" no unanimity is possible. For there are and could be as many opinions as there are men; but descending to the field of action, there are only a few ways of doing it, and perhaps only in some one particular way the desired end could be achieved. Let us begin to do something in some way. There cannot be two opinions about the need of actual work. But enthusiasm alone cannot carry us far. We must have the proper training for the work. For this we want a training organization that should be above all parties and politics and its first duty must be to provide courses of training for the village workers in the various directions. Even immediately if some means could be found for popularising village life and village work something could be achieved. What we mean is that if the teachers, lawyers, and others who have a regular vacation for some months in the year could only think it worth while to spend their leisure in the villages, they could not only study the various problems at first hand but also could do much to educate the people in many directions by their work and examples. Notwithstanding all the poetic praise over the charms of village life and rural simplicity the city-bred does not feel at home in the villages, for there are no cinemas, no clubs, not even the inevitable restaurants. It is nevertheless true until men of culture and leisure make the villages their home there is no chance of improving the lot of our villages. Everything turns ultimately

upon the question of men. In the memorable words of the Patriot-Saint of India—the Swami Vivekananda what is wanted is, “A hundred thousand men and women, fired with zeal of holiness, fortified with eternal faith in the Lord and nerved to lion’s courage by their sympathy for the poor and the fallen and the down-trodden, preaching the gospel of salvation, the gospel of help, the gospel of social raising up—the gospel of equality.”

NOTES AND COMMENTS

WHERE TO IS AMERICA DRIFTING ?

That America is drifting towards a most deplorable future is amply evinced from Mr. A. Huxley’s article in a recent issue of the Harper’s magazine. “Nothing is more remarkable”, says this writer, “than the recent American tendency to exalt the ordinary man, occupied with ordinary worldly affairs, at the expense of the exceptional man who takes no such interest in such affairs”. In fact almighty Dollar has become the adorable God of that Nation and man’s eminence has come to be judged not by his high moral nature, his selfless love of God and his fellow-being but “by virtue solely of his material position in the world”. “Success,” Mr. Huxley declares, “is the test of social eminence” now and “in spiritual matters disinterestedness is no longer the sign of superiority”. He has heard it boldly stated by “American Spiritual leaders” that “Business is religion”. This identification of business with service,” he observes, “permits the worldling, to identify himself with the Christian saints”. And it will lead on to the next step which will be “to exalt him (the ordinary worldling) above the extraordinary man”, with the result that he “will be condemned and persecuted on principle because he is not ordinary—for not to be ordinary will be regarded as a crime.”

To what a pass is America drifting ! Yet we have reason to be hopeful - hopeful as it augurs the advent of a new era, grander and nobler than the present. But before she attains to that stage she may have to pass through a crisis and untold persecution will be the lot of those who do not believe in her “Dollar Supremacy.” That period of transition is sure to witness the notorious vending of irreligion in the name of religion and the like. And what we are witnessing today is only

a powerful expression of the same eternal battle going on in this earth—the battle between Matter and Spirit. Is America going to submit to 'Matter' or to 'Spirit'. Is she going to participate in the life eternal or preparing herself to enter the broad gate of destruction? The bitter lessons of the Great War ought to be an eye opener for all who have eyes to see.

THE WAY TO HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

"In my Kingdom there are Indians living in peace and amity with Afghans. There are Hindus enjoying the same rights as Muslims and living like brethren," said the enlightened Amir of Afghanistan, Amanullah, the other day at Bombay in a reply to one of the many addresses presented to His Majesty before he left for Europe. This gives us food for reflection. Tolerant India has been in a turmoil for the last half a century and more over this vexed question and the Hindu-Muslim tension has shown a tendency to increase and not decrease under the civilised administration of Pax Britannica. It is something sad yet interesting to observe that under a Muslim Ruler, the Amir, the Hindu and the Muslim live in peace and amity while under a "Christian Government" which has no particular interest in the religion of one or the other of the vast religious communities it governs, it has not yet been able to bring about a better understanding between these two great religious bodies. One salient point put forward by the Britisher for his claim to Trusteeship of young India has been that left to themselves, Indians will not be able to keep peace in their own borders because of this great conflict that they are witnessing everyday between the Mussalmans and the Hindus. Could the same Government which with a stroke of its pen stopped the practice of Sati, put down Thuggy, under the pretext of "religious neutrality," allow the hundreds of disturbances that are going on in the country, allow the raking up of questions, customs and manners, unheard of half a century before, we ask in all sincerity? We opine that a great deal of this trouble amongst the governed undoubtedly is due to lack of a truly religious back ground in the system of Government that is over us. In common with all modern systems of Western government, the British too is un-christian and simply materialistic. And that is one of the main reasons why India in transition has become a hot bed of so-called religious fights. We do say this after serious reflexion. For no Government other than one materialistic could

voice through its selected representative—no less than a governor, to wit—Lord Eliphenstone, "Divide et impera was the old Roman motto, and that it should be ours" as early as 1850, and 75 years after, one of that same Government's responsible officials, Lord Oliver, the Secretary of State, writing in the *Times* thus: "On the whole there is a predominant bias in British officialdom in favour of the Muslim Community, partly on a ground of closer sympathy but more largely as a make-weight against Hindu Nationalism." The Materialistic unchristian culture of the West has by its puissance drawn India into its vortex and what we see before us is the result of the battle going on between the different cultures. In this great cultural battle Religion has been brought into prominence by a small body of Hindus and Mussalmans who have swallowed the bait of the loaves and fishes which the powers that be have thrown amongst them diplomatically. The same materialistic culture has devised a history of the country and tried to poison the growing minds by emphasising the darker side and weaknesses of the two communities that inhabit the motherland. During this half a century the village Toles which imparted culture to the vast mass of India's population ceased to exist and with it the vast population lost touch with India's ancient culture. The new generation of school folk are being brought up along the path of the West, learning A. B. C. at school, and with it a perverted history of the country. The history for those school folk could not be said to have been written without bias, for through and through these books a thoughtful reader could note the crusader's hand in picturing the rule of the crescent in India and an attempt to purposely overcolour the powerful arm's of the West to hypnotise the young and tender minds—these seekers of truth, and instil into them their utter incapacity and worthlessness as a nation. We need not be supposed to speak in this strain without enough authority to fall back upon. To take but a few instances of this thrusting of falsehood into the younger minds we need not go far; and how this sort of education has undermined Indian progress one cannot lay too much stress. But how long can one suppress the Truth. Truth has to come to light one day or another. In his "The Other side of the medal"—a history of the Indian Mutiny—Mr. Thompson its author has opened the eyes of the hypnotised, young Indian minds and there reasons out for exposing the lies and half truths of that page in Indian history

on the ground that "Truth has an eternal title to our confession though we are sure to be sufferers by it." Truly did the Rev. Andrews once remark about the history that is written for the younger generation in India that there is hardly any trace of impartiality or of perspective or of breadth of outlook and vision. "There is no fairness or moral judgment when a great issue has to be forced and a complete refusal to criticise or condemn any action done by an Englishman". The School boy is not even now shown the true picture fearing it may rouse in his mind feelings of aversion for all the West has to say to him. The black lie of a Black Hole is yet in the histories prepared for schools. How can the eager, tender heart be turned to look to the West for light if Indian History printed the bright side of Indian character too? How could materialistic culture conquer the Eastern world without adopting such methods? For this cultural conquest the Mussalman had to be painted black to the Hindu and vice versa. Hence we note, in the Western historian a tendency to impress at length in text books, Mohammadan writers speaking of Hindus as "black crows", the Mussalmans massacring the Hindus and laying too much stress on Mussalman ferocity and bigotry. They have not told their readers that the fanatic Alamgir, the Emperor Aurangzeb was one of the foremost patrons of Bhasha. They have always tried to make differences rather than harmony and to make the rift wider. Mr. Mahomed Yakub is not wrong when he writes about the "Mussalmans and the Hindu Literature" in the December number of the *Indian Review* thus. "Owing to the changed political situation on account of the British sway over the country, the education programme of India also underwent radical changes along with other political and social conditions and both the Hindus and the Mussalmans now derive their knowledge of the other only through the exaggerated and misleading accounts contained in the histories compiled by Anglo-Indian historians which create a deep rooted hatred of one community against another." Typoo has been depicted as a bigot of the first water but why this bigot allowed Hindus to have their ways in his own capital city and other parts of his kingdom—the writer of the history of this bitter enemy of the Company has never told his readers. Materialistic culture of the West with Might as its Right - emphasising the animal nature in man, using its god-given intellect for satanic and diabolical purposes, proclaiming nothing

is mean in love and war has tried to penetrate India and not a little of these Hindu Muslim troubles that darken the history of this unfortunate country has been undoubtedly due to this penetration of a strange culture. This sad spectacle is again rousing up the people and we often hear what a writer opines in the *Patna Times* "knowledge which is aggressive, science which slays and culture which comes to kill are dangerous forces which break down civilization and set up Babel instead. We don't want such a culture and civilization."

To bring about a better understanding the first and foremost essential is to strike the axe at the root of the tree— the education that has fostered this disruption—and letting the younger generation know that Hindus and Mussalmans have lived in this vast country for centuries in peace; and concord was not a thing unknown in the past as historians have tried to depict, and that the recent manifestation of intercommunal hatred, blood shed, incendiarism are matters of recent history. In short, the education imparted should be in the interest of the nation and not of a communal character. Second but equally important is the humanising education of the masses. In 1835 a distinguished member of the General Committee of Public Instruction is said to have calculated that there was a village School for 400 persons in Bengal and Behar or on an average, a school for every 32 boys. This is not from any imagination of the Hindu mind. This is what the well known missionary Mr. Adams speaks of his own experience "As regards Hindu and Moslem Schools in the Bengal Presidency there were Toles and Madrasahs in all the larger villages as well as in towns." Where are they gone today? The crass ignorance prevalent in the villages undoubtedly have helped the so-called educated Hindu and Mussalman brought up in this nasty system of education to incite them for their selfish purposes. And as religion touches them to the quick these so-called educated men having swallowed the bait of communal electorates, and communal schools have helped to work up the passions of the populace.

By trying to keep the cultures apart one shall not be able to fuse them. Youngmen should be given the opportunity to come in contact, study and understand the great ideals that lie at the back of these two civilizations. For this purpose we should have a system of education suited to our needs. Education has been only for lucrative employment, and creating an air of false

superiority in the so-called educated classes. It has been avowedly built for bringing about a "Strictly commercial union between the first manufacturing and the first producing country in the world." What has it been given for? Said Macaulay in 1835—that under this scheme 'The Educated Indian would be English in taste, opinion, morals, and intellect and the English connection with India would thereby be firmly and for ever established'. If better understanding is to dawn this study of Western culture at the cost of Islamic and Hindu cultures by the younger generation will have to be given up. We perfectly agree with the sentiment expressed by Dr. Ansari at the recent Congress "With greater knowledge of each other's deep-rooted sentiments and sympathy for each others ideal, questions of separate representation, cow slaughter, and music before mosques will become matters of the past". We say education first, education second, education last—a proper system of education alone can bring lasting peace and good will between these two great bodies of Indian Society.

The A. B. C. of India's Regeneration

"India from times of yore has been famous for its village communities" writes Mr. V. N. Mehta in an interesting article on Grama Sangathan or Rural Reconstruction in a recent issue of the *Benares Hindu University Magazine*. "Outram and Maine have left eloquent pictures of their history, their efficiency and their decay. They have always been represented as self sufficient republics, where the individual toiler of the soil found full scope for the development of his powers and remained happy in spite of the vicissitudes of fortune to which Ruling dynasties were subject. It is the one contribution that India has to make to the history of the world culture, just as Greece had her city state viz. her village community. Let us visualise the administrative structure of the Indian middle ages. There is the Desh or Province with its Danda Nayak or Governor. Its main subdivision is the Bhukti or district with its Rashtrapati or district officer; its second division is the Vishaya or Tashil with its Vishaya Pati or Tashildar and lastly its Grama or village with its Gramika or Akshapatalika, Mukhia or village Patel. The village at the bottom with its body of officials, Gramika or Karanika formed the unit, and multiples of such Gramas and Vishayas worked up to the Bhukti.

Manu says :—*यमस्याधिपतिं कुर्यादग्रामपतिं तथा*

विंशतीषं घटोत्तमं सदृशपतिमेव च—in Chap 115

"There should be a chieftain for ten villages, for twenty, for one hundred and for one thousand. Thus was the administrative hierarchy arranged. Each unit complete in itself and yet grouped under a higher administrative unit."

"The first signs of self consciousness that a Grama or village exhibits is the obtainment by it of a copperplate grant rendering it exempt from the payment of taxes and secure from the entry of soldiers. It secures freedom from the payment of the cess on the increase of cattle—wealth or contribution in milk and flowers or hides. Lastly it obtains freedom from the salt tax and retains its own treasure trove. The reading of these copperplates reminds students of European History of the liberties wrested by the Burghers in the Middle ages from their feudal lords, lay and spiritual. Not only was the village economy brought up to the full level efficiency which a Megasthenes admired, not only were the villages self sufficient, but they became assertive units and claimed the possession of certain liberties (not the singular liberty but the plural liberties) which meant "hands off" in all important matters from the side of the central Authority. The grant of privileges have been secured from all powerful rulers and not usurped from feeble hands"—If this is the rosy picture of the Northern Indian villages neither were the South Indian villages less self sufficient or less self governing as a cursory glance into the pages of that well written History of South India from the pen of Mr. S. Krishnaswami Iyengar will show. But when we turn to the pages of any Governmental record or book written on the village life and economy of India to-day, we can only see a dismal picture of hunger and despair on the face of these village communities these toiling millions of India.

Modern students of Indian economics have attributed this appalling poverty and degradation of the Indian Masses to the lack of industries, in this country, the conservative habits of the Indian people, their inability to adopt themselves to the varying times, and hence their incapacity to compete in the world's market. But the academic discussions and the 'ways-out' have not as yet brought forward a clear cut solution for this grave problem which has day by day been growing worse and is now beginning to threaten the safety of the Hindu system of a well-ordained Society. Many a time it has been pointed out to us that through Industry lay the salvation of these toiling

people and not through agriculture and that transformation of agricultural India into an Industrial India would soon bring her the millennium. Ape Europe and the masses will be happy was the sum and substance of this cry. The supporters of that system never for a moment gave their thought to the great factory problems, the serious unemployment question, the struggle between labor and capital, and many an akin question which have demanded solution in Europe today. Europe took to industry, exploited other lands with her money and her army, and rose to great national prosperity and India should follow suit was the contention of these students of Indian economics. But bloodshed and Bolshevism have come in the wake of Europe's prosperity ought to be an awakener for a people who have an eye upon building a more stable and lasting civilization. We are glad to hear a change in the cry now—the cry of "Back to the land." Already India has suffered enough in her attempt to change with the moving times. Her village system which Mr. Metha has beautifully described is gone—There has already come to the forefront the question of unemployment. Millions of Indian children drawn from the villages into the towns and cities, having spent their all for a system of education which can bring neither food nor happiness have raised a problem which is threatening the very peace of India today. They are the products of an ill-adapted education. They have to "get on" but they have not the physique to go back to the plough nor have they the money to start an independent industry and for them who have the money they cannot get the education they want in this country.

So we welcome the present cry "Back to the land." We agree with them who say that industry does help to make a country rich and prosperous. But first food and food means agriculture—and we believe that improvement in agriculture—with supplementary cottage industry is the best suited for the freedom and happiness of the vast village communities of India if we do not wish to have Bolshevism in this country. When we remember that 22 crores in India live upon agriculture and that in this vast country over 11 crores of acres of land still remain waste our contention is strengthened that India's welfare lies in the path of the development of agriculture and rural industry. In short instead of laying too much stress on town planning and city improvement we have to find the ways and means of village reorganization.

Now that village has lost much of its ancient traditions and its brain power, it has become the duty of a well organized Government to place such people in charge of village affairs as would bring about the wished for end if they do not desire in the near future a wave of Bolshevism in the land. We agree with Mr. Mehta when he says that at present "we have imposed on the Grama (village) everything from outside" "only maintaining forms of self Government" and keeping only a show of reality. At present he says, "all that local District Board generally does for them in return for the Abwab is to provide a hedge School for the boys—none for the girls"—"It does nothing effective for the health of the villager nor for his cattle. Little care is taken to provide him with facilities of communication with the outside world."

And what is all this due to? Mr. Mehta points out rightly that this is due to a wrong type of education. "The type of education too we have thought fit to give to our rural masses is suited to the needs of the city bred clerk". Nor is this all. "Children from industrial and agricultural families had been fully admitted to colleges, but only to be drawn from the industries into the learned professions" Thus in a way Mr. Mehta recognizes the wisdom of the ancients in keeping to there hereditary profession.

We also agree with Mr. Mehta that improvement in agriculture, organization of cottage industry and above all a proper system of education—these three alone can bring about the regeneration of India's National and economic life.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

Gandhiji in the Indian villages. By Mahadev Desai. Publisher, S. Ganesan, Triplicane, Madras. Page 349. Price Rs. 2.

We hear these days so much about village re-construction and village re-organization. The importance of this subject can never be too much emphasised when we know that the majority in India are farmers and peasants and live their life in the seven hundred thousand and odd villages spread out in this vast country. Therefore for any man whose heart pulsates with sympathy for his fellowmen village reconstruction remains more important than town-planning.

We congratulate the enterprising Publisher Mr. S. Ganesan of the *Current Thought*, for bringing out an interesting and readable book on a very closely related subject entitled "Gandhiji in the Indian villages." This volume is by Mahadev Desai, Mr. Gandhi's private secretary and describes Mr. Gandhi's experiences in the villages he toured during the year, 1925. It gives us glimpses of the poor and down-trodden and reveals many of the problems such as drink, untouchability, poverty, etc. that demand solution at the hands of India's cultured classes. Perhaps no man living in India to-day had opportunities to come across rural India than Mahatma Gandhi and his pen pictures of Travancore, United Provinces and Behar completes what Mr. Mahadev Desai has written on his master's experiences in Rural Kathiawad, Gujarat, Bengal, Cutch and Wardha in this volume.

The Three World Movements. By the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras.

The book entitled "The Three World Movements" consists of a series of Theosophical lectures delivered in December, 1925, during the Society's Jubilee Convention at its Fiftieth Anniversary and comprises the lectures of a half a dozen well known Adyar Theosophists. Dr. Besant in her lecture on, "The activities of the coming half century" prepares her hearers for the "world teacher" whom she has recently put forward amongst the Theosophists of the West.

Swamijir Katha. In Bengali Published by the Udbodhan Office, Bagh bazar, Calcutta. Pp. 169. Price As. 12.

The book comprises a series of five articles in the form of reminiscences of the Great Swami Vivekananda by his friends and followers; published in the old issues of the Udbodhan. Paper, printing and get up excellent.

Dakshineswar Tirtha Jatra. In Bengali. By Tristup Mukhopadhyaya M. A. Published by Messrs B. N. Sarkar & Co. 20, Tangara Road, Calcutta. Pp. 147. Price One Rupee.

This handy book gives the readers a brief account of Sri Ramakrishna's life and teachings from a philosophical standpoint together with a historical account of Dakshineswar. It contains eight pictures and two genealogical tables—one of Sri Ramakrishna and the other of Rani Rashmani. The book marks the earnestness and devotion of the writer for the subject.

NEWS AND REPORTS

SWAMI SHARVANANDA'S ACTIVITIES AT DELHI

It is not yet a year since the Sri Ramakrishna Math at Delhi was founded by Swami Sharvananda, the former president of the Madras Math. After founding the Math he had been out to Simla, Bombay, Poona and Nagpur on a lecturing tour. He returned only two months back and has been taking up religious classes in the Gita, the Upanishads and other Sastras at the Math as well as in different parts of the city and occasionally delivering lectures. His masterly exposition of the Sastras from a non-sectarian stand-point has been very much appreciated by the Sanatanists and the Bengalee residents of Delhi. This statement will be fully borne out by the fact of the gradual swelling of the attendance in his classes and lectures. The growing popularity of the Swami is also noticeable in the invitations that have come for him from Lahore and many other places.

ANANDA ASHRAMA ACTIVITY, U. S. A.

Swami Paramananda, the head of the Boston Vedanta Centre opened a Library and Reading Room as a branch of the Ananda Ashrama, the extension of the Boston Centre, in Pasadena in temporary quarters. Here every Thursday evening a weekly class is also being conducted.

A NEW VEDANTA CENTRE IN ST. LOUIS, U. S. A.

In response to an invitation from a friend in St. Louis, Mo., to give a few lectures on the Vedanta Philosophy, Swami Prabhavananda, founder and head of the Vedanta Society of Portland, Oregon went over there, and gave a course of four public lectures on October 14th, 15th and 16th, last year. The subjects were "Vedanta and the Four Yogas", "Religion of Love", "Reincarnation and Immortality" and "The Mystic Path." These impressive lectures were well attended and greatly appreciated by large audiences. Following the four public lectures, six evenings were given over to class work, two lessons each evening. There were many people present at these meetings.

At the earnest request of the students, the Swami delivered two more public lectures. The Swami's, clear, logical discourses left a profound impression on the minds of the hearers and intense interest was shown. As a result, a Vedanta Centre was founded in St. Louis. Passage money has already been sent to the Ramakrishna Mission Head-quarters in India for sending a Swami to help him.

The Centre will be supported by free will offering; a large number of people have pledged themselves to support the same. The Swami left St. Louis on October 29th for Portland. On his return trip he stopped at San Francisco for two days to pay a visit to his brother monks and friends there.

THE RAMAKRISHNA SEVASHRAMA, RANGOON

The Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama (Charitable Hospital and Dispensary) Botataung, Rangoon has send its sixth Annual Report to us. Originally started for serving the sick imported labourers for whom there was no provision in the General Hospital of Rangoon, the Sevashram has risen with the kind and sympathetic support of the City Fathers and the Public into a useful institution. The Hospital was started in 1921 with a qualified sub-assistant surgeon and a compounder. Today a number of good doctors of the city attend the Hospital and the cases attended to are sufficient to show to what proportions the work of the Sevashram has grown. The total attendance at the Sevashram was about a lakh (ie) over 83000 outdoor and 1754 indoor patients. The patients included not merely the people of East Burma but from the interior as well. Till 1925 there were only two wards. In 1925 more accomodation was required and the principal event in the history of this growing institution for 1926 was the opening of three more wards by the Governor of the Province.

As regards finance, the total maintenance charge for the year under report came to Rs. 26647-8-9 against the total receipt of Rs. 27191-7-9 leaving a small credit balance of Rs. 543-15.

The Sevashrama's activities have not merely been medical treatment and nursing of patients, but as the report says have included education of the patients in the elementary principles of the preservation of health and character as also of personal and social hygiene.

May this institution grow further still with the full support of the public and continue to play its proper role in the civic life of that growing city.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ANATHA ASHRAM, BARANAGAR

We have received a copy of the report of the Ramakrishna Mission Anatha Ashram, Baranagar for the years 1925 and 1926. Started under the title 'Baranagar Home of Service' in 1912 the institution was affiliated to the Mission in 1924 under the present name and has been ever since conducting a home for

the orphans, giving medical relief and organising relief work whenever it was necessary and possible. Its sources of income have been from collection of rice, gifts of clothes; subscriptions and donations—amounting to Rs. 9809-5-10 for the 2 years under report. The orphanage had in 1925, 25 orphans hailing from all parts of Bengal, which came down to 22 in 1926. With the moral and religious training, general and technical education of these orphans have been also attended to. Relief work as providing the indigent widows, the sick with diet and medicine—helping the cremation of the helpless, treating about 9000 patients in the out door dispensary of the orphanage have been some of the Ashram's other activities. Till recently it had no permanent location. Now it has acquired 7½ Bighas of land. Let us hope the public will come forward to put its noble work on solid foundations.

THE VIVEKANANDA SOCIETY, COLOMBO

We are glad to note that the work of the Vivekananda Society in Colombo has been gradually expanding. The twentyfourth Annual Report tells us that its membership has increased from 399 in 1924 to 661 in 1926 and that the collections have been satisfactory. One important activity of the Society has been the conduct of the *Tamil Vivekanandam*—a monthly edited by Swami Vipulananda—with over a 1000 subscribers. It is by itself a good work for the dissemination of Hindu culture and civilisation. In March 1926 the Society started for the needy Hindu children of Colombo a Hindu school the numerical strength of which has risen from 25 to 160 at the end of the year and this shows that a long felt want has been supplied by the Society. The school is a recognised institution with regular religious and moral training of boys and girls. Other activities have been Kathaprasangams on 45 Sundays in the year besides 19 public lectures on religious and moral topics. It has been also conducting classes on *Thirukkural* and *Nannool*—two Tamil classical works—on Saturdays. Some social work for the Kataragama pilgrims has been added to the Society's activities.

It is a pity that the Hindu citizens of Ceylon have not been able to clear off the Society's debt when it is doing so much work for them. May we hope that the society will clear off its debt soon and be in a position to hold its own—and for the great object for which it was started.

THE MADRAS LABOUR UNION

We have received the Annual Report for 1926-27 and a copy of the constitution and rules of the Union. The report shows that the union served the labourer according to its capacity by trying to meet their grievances. The report also tells it received Rs. 6526-15-11; and after meeting all expenses, a balance of Rs. 3778-15-7 remained.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVASHRAM, BALIATI, (DACCA).

We are glad to acknowledge the receipt of the report of the above named Sevashram for 1925 & 1926. During these two years the Sevashram maintained two free schools—one for boys, the other for girls and a Sanskrit *Chatuspathi*. From the outdoor dispensary 1949 patients received medical help and some more were treated in the Ashram.

Nursing, cholera relief, Mela relief etc., were some of its other activities. The Library and the reading room have removed a great want of the villagers. The number of religious classes held during the period was about 150.

During the years under review, the total amount received was Rs. 2680-13-3. The Total expenditure was Rs. 2033-13-2 and there was a balance of Rs. 647-0-1.

The report shows a deposit of Rs. 2970-9-0, Rs. 1250 and Rs. 1911-11-6 in three other accounts—Temple fund, Reserve Fund and Utsav fund respectively.

The authorities of the Sevashram appeal to the benevolent public for funds to facilitate its work. We hope, the kind hearted, public will come forward with their mite and help the Sevashram to carry out its object.

JAYRAMBATI—AN APPEAL

Most of the readers of the *Vedanta Kesari* may be aware that Jayrambati is the birth place of the Holy Mother—Sri Saradamanidevi. Just at the spot where the Holy Mother was born a Matir Mandir has been founded. The Ramakrishna Mission has started also a charitable dispensary to relieve the distressed in the country around. The place is badly malarial. The dispensary at present provides homeopathic as also a few allopathic medicines. Funds are not sufficient to extend to all the help necessary in the malarial season.

The poverty and distress makes it impossible for the villagers to have a school. The Ashrama has started a school there for the children.

The Swami in charge therefore appeals for funds for meeting these demands at Jayarambati—which has become a place of pilgrimage, in modern times. Kind donors are requested to send their contributions to Swami Parameswarananda, Matri Mandir, P.O. Deora, Jayarambati, Bankura.

THE VEDANTA KESARI

“Let the lion of Vedanta roar.”

“Let me tell you, strength is what we want
And the first step in getting strength is to uphold
The Upanishads and believe that ‘I am the Atman’

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

~~XXXXXX~~

MARCH 1928

[No. 11]

PRAYER



एकस्मिन् बहुधा विचारः ।
शतं शुक्राणि यत्नैकं भवन्ति ॥
सर्वे वेदा यत्नैकं भवन्ति ।
सर्वे होतारो यत्नैकं भवन्ति ॥
समानसीन आत्मा जनानां ।
अन्तः प्रविष्टः शास्ता जनानां सर्वात्मा ॥
सर्वाः प्रजा यत्नैकं भवन्ति ।
नमो ब्रह्मणे नमो ॥
नमो विष्णवे बृहते करोमि ॥

Salutation unto the Brahman, Who, though One, is regarded as many; in Whom all luminaries merge, and all the Vedas and Hotas are unified.

Salutation unto the Brahman, the great Pervader of the universe, the one Atman dwelling equally in the heart of all beings, the Inner-soul of all existence, the Director of all creation and in Whom all creatures become one. Our salutations unto Him.

YAJURVEDA,

SPIRITUAL TALKS OF SWAMI BRAHMANANDA

One of the outstanding advantages of holy company is that you can thereby come across the daily life of the holy men. Read or hear however much you may, nothing will leave a more profound impression in your mind and benefit you so largely and practically as the company of holy men. As an illustration I would like to relate an incident to you from the life of a devotee. Adhar Sen would always go to Sri Ramakrishna accompanied by a friend of his, an Inspector of Schools. This gentleman (Adhar Babu's friend) would at times experience a kind of inspiration and lose all outward consciousness. People called it Bhava. One day it so happened that just after their arrival, the Master fell into deep Samadhi. From his face beamed lustre divine indicating the unbounded joy that the master felt. At the sight of this Adhar Babu said to his companion : "Look here, my friend, seeing your Bhava I got disgusted with it. For, whenever you entered it, you seemed to feel a great torment within. From divine communion cannot result any torment or torture. But from what I see in the Master, this flood of divine joy, my eyes are opened."

Another man once visited Trilinga Swami. (This great saint of Benares usually kept silence). On his return he thought within himself : "I went, but he did not speak ; then what is the good of going to him any more ?" Yet he paid a second visit. This time no sooner had he taken his seat by the side of the Swami, than the latter suddenly began to weep most bitterly, and this was followed by a peal of wild laughter. At this he said to himself : "What I have learnt to-day a thousand books cannot teach. When I shall so yearn for God, I shall see Him ; and when I shall have His grace, only then shall I enjoy such bliss."

- Q.** Maharaj, many maintain that merely paying visit to holy men is enough—hearing them or observing their life is not so much a necessity. Are we to believe this?
- A.** Oh, no! never! You must mix with them with an open heart. And if any doubt arises in your mind, speak it out to them frankly and get it at once solved by their help if you are not able to do it yourself. You must also observe their life in detail and model yours in the light of that. Do you follow?
- Q.** Maharaj, you said that momentary enthusiasm and fuss brings no good, and that spiritual realisation is a question of time—then am I to give up my yearning for God-realization?
- A.** I might have said it in connection with some other topic. By momentary enthusiasm is meant to become restless and cry and jump for a day or two from a fit of emotion: an external manifestation of the internal feeling. This disappears in no time, and then out of despair and dejection man gives up that path altogether.
- Q.** As Sri Ramakrishna said that if the site for digging a well is shifted from place to place nowhere water can be had. Isn't it?
- A.** Yes, such tenacity is what is required. If a man's restlessness results from the sincere love of God, he cannot live a God-less life, even though he fails to realise Him thereby. Millions of births may pass without attaining Him and yet he will persist in calling upon Him steadily and quite unmoved.

Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda) used to say that a little awakening of the Kundalini (Individualised Cosmic Energy) is very dangerous. Until She rises up, lust, anger and other lower passions become very

turbulent. So the Vaishnavite Sadhana of Madhur Bhava or Sakhi Bhava (the attitude of worshipping God as an eternal bridegroom or a friend of the devotee) is very 'dangerous.' In trying to remember constantly the story of Sri Krishna's divine amorous play with Sri Radha, they (Vaishnavites) cannot control their lust and do all sorts of lecherous acts. Therefore the restriction for the beginner in reading the *Rash-lila* (story of Sri Krishna's divine play with Sri Radha) and the like.

And meditation, it's not an easy thing at all. Eat a bit more one day and your mind will not settle that day. Thus when lust, anger, greed and the whole host of evil passions can be kept under control, then and then alone meditation becomes possible. If any of these assert itself, meditation will be impossible. It is rather easy to sit in the circle of burning fire. But to keep the passions under control and not to allow them to have their 'impression' upon the mind—that is real Tapasya. What religion for eunuchs! The control of passions and desires is the greatest penance. But then, seeing that the worldly men are constantly involved in doing various heinous acts, it is not so much an act of sin on your part, if some evil thoughts crop up in your mind. Drive them out from the mind.

Without meditation the mind cannot get tranquil, and without tranquillity religion is not possible. To think 'I shall meditate when the mind gets tranquil' is to think of the impossible. Both must go hand in hand.

We have not been able to love Sri Ramakrishna, so there's the idea of bargain in us. It is why we despair when we cannot see him by a little prayer. It is not desirable to give vent to the inner feelings, for that dwindles the intensity of love.

EDITORIAL NOTES

Vivekananda—the Apostle of Strength

Be it as a monk or a preacher, as a patriot or a reformer, as a philosopher or a social worker, Swami Vivekananda was characterised by a remarkable strength and fearlessness that always left an indelible impression on all who came under his influence in some form or other. And rightly has he been called a fighting monk, a dynamic preacher, an intrepid patriot, a fearless reformer, an incontestable philosopher and a dauntless social servant. It has been said that like a cyclone he swept away men and women by the mighty power of his eloquence ; like a thunderbolt he fell upon the ignorant critic and overpowered him completely ; like a bomb shell he threw himself upon society and pulverised the encrustations of ignorance and superstition ; like a dynamo he electrified all who came in close touch with his wonderful personality, and roused them from passivity into activity. His ideal of religion was dynamic but universal, his programme of reform was constructive but liberal, his plan of social service was active but selfless. All these were expressions of a tremendous power that comes only to one who, knowing the Highest Truth, has become fearless and invincible ; and these could be followed only by those who possessed a heart that knew no weakness or fear. Indeed, Swami Vivekananda was a veritable embodiment of strength, and it was but natural that he should become the apostle of a gospel of strength and fearlessness that is bringing about a revolution in the life and thought of many in India and abroad.

His Man-making Religion

To mankind blinded by ignorance and superstition, dehumanised by tyranny and oppression, and hypnotised

by the sense of weakness and helplessness, the Swami brought the rejuvenating message of strength and hope. With a heart melting with love and sympathy for others, he cried out—"Strength is the one thing needful. Strength is the medicine which the poor must have, when tyrannised over by the rich. Strength is the medicine that the ignorant must have when oppressed by the learned; and it is the medicine that sinners must have when tyrannised over by other sinners" * * "It is man-making religion that we want. It is man-making theories that we want. Anything that makes you weak physically, intellectually and spiritually reject it as poison, there is no life in it; it cannot be true. Truth must be strengthening, must be enlightening, must be invigorating." And the source of this strength is the consciousness that the real man in us is not a mere clod of earth, nor a bundle of ideas, but is the Spirit Eternal—the eternal source of all power, purity and knowledge. In this glorious doctrine of the potential Divinity of man, did the Swami found a new spiritual power able to create a new epoch of renaissance and re-construction in human society. The rank materialist, the scoffing agnostic, the thoughtless fanatic, the jealous missionary—all attacked him with great vehemence. But in the face of all oppositions and criticisms he proclaimed his message with a boldness and strength that made itself felt by foes and friends alike. His teachings to the Westerner and to the Indian were essentially the same, though in certain respects they varied as to their details and application. He prized truth more than anything else in the world, and always spoke the truth, without trying in the least to suppress or distort it for the sake of winning the praise and support of others. He frankly admired the merits and virtues of all peoples and their cultures, and pointed out at the same time their faults and defects in unmistakable terms. And the one object he had always in view was to make man a true man, and woman a true woman.

His Message to the West

The Swami was a great admirer of the Westerner's art and science, his active temperament, his spirit of independence and his power of organization. But he could never close his eyes to the horrors of Western civilisation. Inordinate craving for material achievement, mad rush for world supremacy, reckless subjection and exploitation of weaker peoples, mutual jealousy and hatred—all these have converted the land of the Occidental nations into a vast military camp. With his clear vision the Swami saw the danger ahead, and said to his countrymen. "The whole of the Western world is on a volcano which may burst to-morrow, go to pieces to-morrow. They have searched every corner of the world and have found no respite. They have drunk deep of the cup of pleasure and found it vanity. Now is the time to work so that India's spiritual ideas may penetrate deep into the West." He also noted with great solicitude the religious intolerance, the social shams, the political hypocracies and the cruel and predatory tendency prevalent in the Western nations. He further found out that their apparent strength was a clear indication of spiritual poverty and weakness, and therefore he spoke to them of nothing but the words of strength. He boldly asked the Westerner to be true to the spirit of his religion, to give up his undue importance on the conception of sin, and to realise the ideals of universalism, potential Divinity of man, and spiritual solidarity of mankind—the three essential doctrines of the Vedanta which is both religion and philosophy. The Swami carried to the Western mind not only these, but also other new, and equally bold ideas and ideals. In place of the Christian theological doctrines of one birth, creation out of nothing and eternal damnation, he presented the Hindu ideas of re-incarnation, evolution and salvation for all. To a world accustomed to hear of Christianity as the only true religion, he

brought the astounding message that all religions were true. "Help, not fight," "Assimilation and not destruction," "Harmony and peace and not dissension"—this was the burden of his teachings to the West.

His Service to India

Great has been the good that the Swami did to the West, but greater still has been the service he rendered to his motherland. If he opened the eyes of the Westerners to new truths sure to have far-reaching effects, he brought to his countrymen, a new awakening that is calculated to influence the entire world. The force with which this spiritual giant moved the West reacted on India with a tremendous power and stirred the very depths of Indian Society. The hypnosis of political and cultural subjection made the Indians forget the glory of their ancient heritage, and look upon themselves as weak and helpless. And in frantic despair did many of them try to inoculate themselves with the lymph of Western culture cleverly placed before them by the self-seeking imperialists who devised the present educational system of the land. At such a momentous hour he appeared on the platform of the Chicago Parliament of Religions, revealed the eternal truths of Hinduism to the wondering West, and at once won thousands as true staunch followers and admirers. He thus raised the Indians not only in the estimation of the Occidentals but also in that of their own. And when he returned to his motherland, and thundered forth to his countrymen his great message, reminding them of their past greatness, pointing out to them unsparingly their evils and defects, urging them to give up their debasing feelings of weakness and impotency and manifest their manhood and power, the Indians came to realise along with the superb greatness of the Swami, also something of their own potentiality as a nation. Indeed the clarion call of the Swami has brought in India a new sense of self-respect

and self-reliance, a new national consciousness, the central theme of which is the manifestation of Indian manhood in all its manifold aspects, physical, intellectual and spiritual.

His Message to His Countrymen

The Swami asked his co-religionists and compatriots to practise the habit of "thinking backward", and also to make a passionate effort for "living forward." He held that a people that forgets its glorious past cannot hope to have any bright future. And he roused the historic consciousness of his countrymen with a view to create in them an unshakable faith in themselves, a faith that is a sure guarantee for future greatness. By greatness however, he never understood more political power or economic supremacy, but individual and collective self-realisation that finds its fulfilment in the domain of the spirit, and manifests itself in an all-round service, national as well as international. Thus the ideal he placed before his people was not a mere revival of the past, but the creation of a living present that is sure to usher in a new era of progress and glory. The source of this inspiration the Swami found in the inspiring teachings of the Upanishads. It is therefore that he thundered forth—"Back to the Upanishads. Back to the strengthening, life-giving teachings of the Upanishads.....What we want is strength, strength and every time strength. And the Upanishads are the great mine of strength. Therein lies strength enough to invigorate the whole world; the whole world can be vivified, made strong, energised through them. They will call with trumpet voice upon the weak, the miserable and the down-trodden of all races, all creeds, and all sects, to stand on their feet and be free; freedom, physical freedom, mental freedom and spiritual freedom are the watch-words of the Upanishads." A practical Vedantin that he was he based his gospel of strength on the doctrine of the Atman—the infinite, omnipresent and omniscient

spirit dwelling in all. If man is the Atman, he need not eternally depend on others in his helplessness. He should, instead, stand on his own strength, and declare that he is deathless and eternal, untouched by the miseries and pains, troubles, and tribulations of the world. The ideally strong man according to the Swami is he who possesses that high spiritual mood in which he laughs at both life and death, and has along with it "muscles of iron and nerves of steel, gigantic will which nothing can resist." And he himself stands as the perfect embodiment of the ideal he held before his country and the world. Great was the stress he laid on physical and mental strength along with the spiritual. It is not for the weakling and the coward to understand the highest truths of religion; the fearless and the heroic alone can appreciate them. And he gave expression to this startling idea in his famous Madras lecture—*Vedanta in its Application to Indian Life*. "Be strong, my young friends, that is my advice to you. You will be nearer to heaven through football than through the study of the Gita. You will understand the Gita better with your biceps, your muscles a little stronger. You will understand the mighty genius and mighty strength of Sri Krishna with a little strong blood in you. You will understand the Upanishads better and the glory of the Atman when your body stands firm upon your feet and you feel yourselves as men. Not by the help of others but by the energy of Indians themselves should India rise."

Conquering the Conqueror

Swami Vivekananda asked his countrymen to stand on their own strength, and also to further the spiritual mission of their motherland. From time immemorial, he pointed out, India, the home of religion and philosophy, has been a conqueror of conquerors. Innumerable foreign races and tribes, who invaded the land tempted by its riches and wealth, came under the influence of its religion and

culture, and were either completely assimilated into the body of Hindu Society, or were so remarkably transferred that they came to differ greatly in their thoughts and outlook from their co-religionists in their native lands. In the past the field of conquest was the soil of India itself, but now it has extended to lands beyond the seas. By Divine grace the Swami Vivekananda—the intrepid child of Mother India—went “to beard the lion in his den”, and began a new era of “the conquest of the world by the Indian thought,” of conquering the alien conqueror also in his own home. But the Swami was not a narrow and exclusive nationalist. This great preacher of “aggressive Hinduism” knew in his heart of hearts that the assertion of individuality, assimilation of new elements and expansion of the field of activity are the signs of a vigorous life. Hence when he asked his countrymen to stem the tide of the invasion by Western thoughts, and preserve their cultural integrity, he also urged them to learn from the West her arts and sciences, and to give her in return the spiritual truths so very essential for saving her soul from being overpowered by the national ideals of life. And he used the terms “aggressive” and “conquest” in their highest possible sense. The ideal he held before him and the world was one of “give and take,” of the exchange and assimilation of mutual ideals by both the East and the West. “You go to England,” he said to his countrymen, “but that is also in the garb of a beggar praying for education. Why? Have you nothing to give them? An inestimable treasure you have, which you can give,—give them your religion, give them your philosophy! From time immemorial India has been the mine of precious ideas, to human society; giving birth to high ideas herself, she has freely distributed them broadcast over the whole world. Give these valuable gems in exchange for what you receive from them.” Indeed, fearlessness, self-respect, self-help, service at home and abroad, with the Divine as the goal of life and the source

of all inspiration,—in one word, “Strength”—this has been the dominating note that permeated the life and teachings of the Swami. Fearless and intrepid as he was he delivered his message in his fearless and intrepid way. And very happily does he himself speak of it in his memorable words—“Bold has been my message to the people of the West, bolder is my message to you, my beloved countrymen. The message of ancient India to new Western nations I have tried my best to voice—ill done or well done the future is sure to show, but the mighty voice of the same future is already sending forward soft but distinct murmurs, gaining strength as the days go by, the message of India that is to be to India as she is at present.”

THE DOCTRINE OF EXPERIENCE AS THE ONE SELF

By Prof. K. Sundararama Iyer, M. A.

Chap. X—Adhyasa (Superposition)

We now take up for explanation the topic of Adhyasa, which has been called the “*Cruz*” of the Vedanta. Sankara, at the very start, clearly points out that, though it *seems* apparently impossible that two such direct contradictories as the effulgence of the self (*Svaprahasa*) and primordial ignorance (*Ajnana, Maya, Prakriti*) can be identified with one another, such a mutual identification (*paras-paradhyasa*) is a matter of *universal* daily experience—the common lot of the generality of mankind. Further, it is distinctly pointed out in the Upanishads and the Gita that the Absolute Self-Effulgence is *concealed* from us by the objects of the phenomenal manifestation of Maya which are superimposed on the same,—and it will be only revealed in all its fullness *simultaneously* with the removal of the latter. In fact the vanishing of Avidya implies the self-revelation (*Avagati*) of Brahman in full. This *Brahma-Avagati* (or *Samyag-darsanam*, which is another expression with the same import) is brought to us through the teaching of the Maha-Vakya by the Guru when we have become fully qualified for it by the previous stages of preparation,—and Sankara frequently points out that it cannot arise

through a mere injunction (*Vidhi* or *Niyoga*). All ritualistic (*Karmic*) injunctions and even the methods of deep meditation and concentration (*upasana*) contained in the Vedas are only intended to bring about the fullness of preparation for Jnana which is known as *shagya-chitta*, the purity and one-pointedness of mind which is needed in the disciple passing through the *diksha-sampradaya* (course of training for the initiated).

Sankara defines *Adhyasa* as "*Atasminstad-buddhi*,"—"the perception (or knowledge) of a thing in what it is not,"—or, again, as "*smritirupah-paratra-purvadrishthuvabhasah*,"—i. e., "the appearance,—in the form of remembrance,—of a thing previously known in another place (or thing)." There is another name given to the phenomenon,—*vis.*, *Upayaga* (Identification) retransformation of one thing into another" (form). This name is given by Thotakacharya. In his view it is the mind—which he calls *Mati*—that is first transformed into the object sensed by it and assumes the form of the latter. Where such *sensing* takes place, the resulting transformation of the mind (*buddhi* or *mati*) is transferred to the individual soul (Jivatman) to which it is related, and the result is that the perceived object becomes thereby known to consciousness. If no "sensing" occurs, no impression is left behind in consciousness for the reason that the mind is not at all transformed into the form of the object before it. In fact, such sensing and the consequent transformation may—and ought to be—considered as one and the same process.

The ignorance of the exact nature (or form) of the object before a seer leads to the perception or presentation (*upalabdhi*) of something else,—as, for example, a piece of silver instead of the actual mother-of-pearl in front, or a serpent, instead of the rope before us. Let us consider this fact of perception (or presentation) in full. In front of me, there is a mother-of-pearl. If I see (or know) it correctly and in full, my knowledge will take the form, "this mother-of-pearl". Owing to a fault (*dosha*) in me, I do not know it correctly or fully. Hence my false knowledge which takes the form, "this silver". This false knowledge (or false perception) is known as *Adhyasa*. It contains clearly *two* elements,—(1) the knowledge of "this," and (2) the knowledge of silver. The former is a correct knowledge; but the latter is a false one, and is due to the ignorance (*ajnana*) of the element of mother-of-pearl which forms of the correct knowledge,—Knowledge which takes the form, "this mother-of-pearl". This *ajnana* has already been fully considered and shown to be no mere negation, but a positive fact or phenomenon. It is the cause of the superposition (*adhyasa*) of silver, and takes *two* forms of superposition—(1) the silver falsely superposed, (2) the knowledge arising

through the sensing of the silver superposed. These two are respectively known (in the terminology of Advaitic thinkers) as *Arthadhyasa* (the superposition of the object) and *Jnanadhyasa* (the superposition of its knowledge),

Both the falsely superimposed silver and the knowledge of it have as their cause the mother-of-pearl in front, but of whose true nature the seer is ignorant. The mind of the seer has the power of lengthening itself in a chain so as to reach the objects in front. Hence, when the mind, in the instance on hand, lengthens itself out to the superimposed silver, this false knowledge (of silver) thereby gained can be said to have the same cause as the silver itself which is known. Of course, the mind (of the seer) is as much a contributing cause (of *adhyasa*) as the object sensed or superposed,—and thus the Vedantin reconciles both the Western Schools of realism and idealism by his theory of *Adhyasa*.

Both these *adhyasas* as already previously explained, have their sufficient cause in *Avidya* (Maya), and are known as (forms of) *Avidya-vrittis*, transformations of *Avidya* (ignorance) into the forms of object (previously known to us). As, however, knowledge (whether true or false) is due to the mind's power of lengthening itself out so as to reach and sense the object, we say that it (knowledge) is due to the mind's inherent and active power of transforming itself—and to this knowledge is known as *Antahkarana-vritti*. Owing to the primordial ignorance (*Ajnana*, *Maya*, or *Prakriti*), the one pure Self loses its self-effulgence, and hence there results the superposed, living, re-incarnating, personality known as the Jiva (*Ego*). Egoism (*ahankara*) is itself the evolutionary effect of the primeval ignorance (*Avidya*, or *Prakriti*), and is usually accepted as including within its range not only the mind, but also the individual's material body (*sthula sarira*) and vital principle (*prana*). All these are superposed on the Atman in turn; and even external objects are sometimes regarded as identified with the self when the attachment (*abhimana*) towards them has become hardened and strengthened to the extreme point by long association. Sankara points out that, though the interior self is entirely disconnected with, and even opposed to the non-ego (or external object), it is entirely a natural procedure (*naisargikaloha-vyavaharak*) on the part of all ordinary men not to distinguish the two entities and their attributes, and that all transmigratory existence during eternity in the universe of phenomena is due to the identification of them.

We have just spoken of the identification of the *attributes* of objects. This is a *third* distinction in *Adhyasa*, and is known as

Dharmadhyasa, as distinguished from the *Arthadhyasa* or *Dharmi-adhyasa* (already mentioned above)—the identification of objects with each other or with the self, which is the foundation of all re-incarnating existence. *Dharmadhyasa* (otherwise known also as *Samsarga-dhyasa*) consists in the transference (through association) of the attributes of one thing to another. For example, when a piece of red cotton is placed by the side of a white crystal (*sphatika*), the redness of the former is alone transferred so as to make the crystal become invested with that attribute. This false superposition of an attribute only on an object is known as *Dharmadhyasa*. In this case, only the attribute of one object is transferred to another. But in the case of the identification of the intelligent self with the non-intelligent and material mind, vital principle, or body and the consequent reference to them as I or mine, there is a *mutual identification* of the attributes of both (*paraspara-adhyasa*), along with the identification of those entities (*arthas*). For example, when a person asks another,—“Why did you beat me?”—Not only is there an identification of the body with the self, but the action of beating is transferred from the body to the self; and the feeling of pain is transferred from the intelligent individual to the body which is often spoken of as being pained. Again, when a person says, I have lost my strength, he ascribes the attribute of strength (or weakness) which really belongs to the *prana* (vital principle) to the self. When a person says, I am a man, he identifies himself with the gross body, Prana, mind, and all. Men consider themselves as rich or poor. But abundance and limitation are attributes of property, not of the owner thereof, and are simply transferred to the latter through *adhyasa* due to beginningless ignorance (*anadyavidya*).

All these various kinds and modes of *Adhyasa* arise only through the imagined (*Kalpanika*) relationship of the Self to the not-self. In and by itself, the Self (the Atman) is one only, pure, and self-effulgent, and of the essence of the innermost bliss of love. But, through the imagined relationship established between the Self and non-self having its origin in beginningless ignorance (*anadyavidya*), it has, of course, also the capacity to lighten up the non-self in all its forms, gross or fine, whether Buddhi, Prana, gross material body, and so on, when the latter are superimposed and identified with it. It is through the Antahkarana or Buddhi (mind, or internal organ) that the object to be known (*boddhavya*) is brought into the (*Kalpita* or) *imaginary relationship of identification* with the witnessing self which we have investigated above and which is called *Adhyasa* (or *Uparaga*) in the Vedanta. When this identification takes place, and only then, the mind of the seer (or witnessing self) is enabled to

lengthen itself out towards the object outside and gets *transformed* into its form and shape,—and perception of the object takes place at the place where the object is situated for the reason that the self (which is one and therefore all-pervading) is also there to lighten it up through the Buddhi (internal organ) which as already stated, is already in a state of imaginary (Kalpita) association and identification with it. This is the Vedantic view of external perception (*upalabdhi*) in brief. It is the *fact* of Adhyasa—the identification of the intelligent self with non-self that enables the living self (Jivatman) through the Buddhi to perform this act of perception by his innate power of illuminating both his own self and everything with whom he is brought into the (Kalpita) relation of identity (*adhyasa*) now under consideration. The transformation (*parinama*) of the Buddhi into the shape of the object (which is accompanied by the illumination of the object and the resulting perception) is clearly to be understood as applying to the Buddhi only,—and not to the *self*, which ever remains pure, and undifferentiated and which is only brought into an imaginary and assumed (Kalpita) relation with the non-self through the phenomenon and fact of *adhyasa*. The pure self becomes the perceiver, witness, (*sakshi*) only through this assumed or imagined relationship of identification of it with the object through the mind and the perception of the object by the self is due to the fact of its *appearing* to assume the form of the object, though only the Buddhi with which it is related through *adhyasa* really does so by getting itself impressed with the shape (*akara*) of such object. This impression or transformation (*parinama*) is known as *buddhi-vritti*. The Buddhi is alone a *vikari*, *parinamini*,—never is the self changed, it remains pure and undifferentiated, one and absolute. It is the identification, through primeval ignorance (*maya* or *ajnana*), of the self with the Buddhi that converts the former into the living seer (*sakshi*) or knower (*pramata*). Sankara says almost at the very commencement of his Sutra-bhashya :—“The means of right knowledge cannot operate unless there be a knowing personality, and the existence of the latter depends upon the assumption, though erroneous, that the body, the senses, and so on, are identical with, and belongs to, the self of the knowing person (*pramata*). For, without the recognition and use of the senses as one's own, the practical exercise (or performance) of the operations of sense-perception (*pratyaksha*) and other sources or means of right knowledge cannot possibly be made to exist. Further, without the body and the senses being superposed on, and identified with, the self, no one can get engaged in any form of outgoing activity. Also, if all these (*phenomenal*) entities are not (assumed to be) existent, the pure and unrelated

self—which, in its own nature, is free from all external contact—cannot become a knower (*pramata*). Further, if there is no such knower, there can be no bringing into operation the means of right knowledge. Hence, perception and the other means of right knowledge, and also the Sastras (Vedas, etc.), are to be regarded as facts having significance only in relation to the self assumed to be affected by ignorance (*maya* or *ajnana*) and therefore related through his body and senses to the world of phenomena where he has his migrations and peregrinations.

From all that has been said so far, it will be seen that it is necessary, before concluding this part of the subject to explain another distinction in Adhyasa,—*viz.*, the distinction between *karana-adhyasa* (causal adhyasa) and *karya-adhyasa* (the Adhyasa which is an effect of the causal Adhyasa and therefore presupposes it). The identification of the Atman with *ajnana* or *avidya* (Maya) is beginningless, and hence is *karana-adhyasa*, *par excellence*. Thence arises the identification of the self with the internal organ (*antah-karanam*, *buddhi*, *manas*, as it is variously called) which it is itself a transformation (or effect) of *Ajnana*. This, again, may be said to be the cause of the identification of the self with the gross body physical, and so on. It is these successive identifications (or Adhyasas) that collectively result in producing the *jiva bhava*, the transmigrating personality for whose ultimate benefit and liberation from bondage the grace of Heaven manifests itself in all the forms familiarised to us through the history of the universe, down even to the days now passing over us.

STUDIES IN PSYCHODYNAMICS

ANÆSTHESIA

Induced by Psychological Process

By S. Sankara Menon, B.A., B.L.

Brief history—Experiments performed by the writer—The effect a psycho-physical phenomenon—Nature of the effect—Development of Psychology in India and the oriental view—The forces underlying suggestion or a mental stimulus—Construction of formulæ for inducing effects—Direction of forces and their polarity—Unity of Physical and Psychical forces probable—Practical value of studies in this subject and conclusion.

Dr. Mesmer produced this effect in his own way in his medical experiments about the latter part of the eighteenth century. In

the year 1825, a Committee of the ablest Scientists in France investigated the truth of this matter and found that purely psychological processes could produce anæsthesia. The Committee's report that was submitted to the Royal Academy of France describes it as follows : " The eyelids are closed. The eyelids yield with difficulty to the efforts made with the hand to open them. This operation which is not without pain allows one to see the eye ball convulsed and directed towards the upper and sometimes the lower part of the orbit." At the present day Hypnotism finds a place as a part of abnormal psychology in the curricula of studies in the Universities. Anæsthesia produced by Hypnotic methods (Braids' methods) is analogous to that induced by Psychological processes and Sir Samuel Wilks, M. D. F. R. S. says that " there is every reason to believe that brain and nerve centres are force-producing organs, that this vis nervosa does not stand for an imaginary essence, but is real power". Hypnotism does not proceed upon the hypothesis of vital energy, but it is based upon auto-suggestion. If the same hypnotic effect could be produced by suggestion other than auto-suggestion, it goes a great deal to establish that suggestion implies a force transmissible under proper conditions. It is the theory as to the nature of this force suggested by certain experiments performed by the writer that forms the subject of this paper.

In the course of the investigations pursued by the writer, a boy of fourteen, two adults of twenty, and a grown-up man of forty-one were the subjects of experiments. These experiments were performed in large ventilated rooms and it required five minutes to thirty minutes to get them anæsthetised. What is done at the initial stage is to ask the subject to take a comfortable lying posture and then to induce the mental forces by self-suggestion in the operator's body and focus them at the ocular centre. In the case of all human beings, this force exists and it is normally dissipated all over the body, the direction being downwards. The trained operator reverses this force into an upward direction and brings this force into his ocular areas and then transmits it into the ocular centre of the subject who gradually becomes amenable to suggestion "you sleep" or "you be insensible." Mere self-induction will have no effect upon another unless it is transmitted by some means such as actual contact, or such proximity of the operator nearly amounting to contact. The effect produced upon the subject is not sudden but gradual. The time required to bring completely under effect varies in different individuals. The time during which the effect lasts depends upon 2 factors (1) the inductive capacity to induce forces by self-suggestion in the body of the operator, (2) the susceptibility or the resistive capacity of the

subject. The effect has lasted from 20 to 30 minutes in the above experiments.

When two points A, B, are taken in space and when two material objects are placed at those two respective points and when a change takes place in the objects at B due to a change in the object at A, the change at B is a case of physical phenomenon whereas if the physical changes at A and B are re-placed by psychical events, the change at B is not merely a case of a physical phenomenon, but it is a psycho-physical phenomenon because the change at B results from a corresponding change at A acting through the physical space enclosed by A and B. The causes producing the psychical events at A and B may be said to be (1) the mental stimulus or the succession of mental stimuli generated by the operator at A, (2) the resultant action of the mental stimulus or stimuli upon the sensory, respiratory and other organs and nerve centres of the subject at B. The physical part of the phenomena consists in the actual transmission of the stimuli from A to B and the changes taking place in the space between A and B are due to such transmission. The space between A and B may be called the psycho-magnetic field and it is in this field that the whole series of physical events take place and it is this field which serves as the medium for transmission of the stimuli. An important question arises here as to the possibility of any change ever taking place at all in the space between A and B. Why should the intervening Ether take a part in the transmission of the stimuli? From Newton downwards, Scientists postulate the existence of an incomprehensible, and non-condensable medium called Ether in order to explain the various physical phenomena. They discard the idea of the possibility of actions at a distance and lay down the fundamental proposition that matter can only act on that which is in contact with it. So we start with the axiom, that a sort of continuousness is necessary to explain an interaction between two particles of matter. We also know that absolute continuity of two particles of matter cannot be established because two particles of matter which, in appearance, cling together most tenaciously, are separated by infinitesimally small distances. If matter could only act upon that which is in contact with it, and if it is actually found that even the smallest particles of an apparently continuous matter are separated by infinitesimally small distances, it becomes necessary to postulate the connecting medium of Ether to explain any sort of inter-action. The Ether hypothesis is further necessitated by the fact that, when energy is transmitted through space, the intervening matter is not affected by such transmission,

Investigators like Sir William Crookes and Professor Flourney think that brain waves are possible to exist but the eminent Psychologist Meyer takes an opposite view to this theory and attributes the transmission of the magnetic influence to a kind of spiritual or unknown communication. Then there are people who believe in the existence of magnetic fluids. Whatever this be, we find that a specific mental stimulus or a series of mental stimuli pass to another point and an effect is produced upon the subject. The operator can very well be imagined to radiate his energy in his self-induced condition. At the commencement of the operation, the subject also begins to receive something which is transmitted by the operator. It is not possible to grasp as to the exact nature of the mental stimulus or suggestion which is transmitted through space. The present limited knowledge in psychology does not allow us to say whether this stimulus is something like an electron, or a corpuscle having a definite charge of energy travelling in any known particular form. It is also hazardous to put forward the theory that the mind consists of minute corpuscles and they are shot out from the operator to the subject. The only inference that we could draw from the operation is that a change travels from the operator which may or may not generate any change in space. It may be the psycho-physical changes occurring in space that account for the lasting nature of the effect in the experiments described above.

In order to understand how these forces are induced by the operator by self-suggestion using short formula (or a mantra in Sanskrit) it is necessary to consider the theory and application of the units of forces and time according to the oriental psychologists. Psychology developed in India to a very high limit, but in its development, took a different line from that of the development in Europe. In India Psychology was studied and applied only as a means of finding out the truths of religion and was never a study in itself as in Europe. Religion as current in India can be roughly divided into two portions, the abstract and the ritualistic. The end was the same in both the schools, but in their methods was difference. So there were two different branches of Psychology that grew up in India:—(1) Psychology of the ritual, (2) Psychology of the abstract religion. Both systems had the mind as the instrument to catch the unknown. In the first case mind became the object of study in its various emotional aspects and the truths arrived at were freely applied to dive into the higher depths of religion. In the second case, discarding the emotional aspects of mind, they studied it more from the subjective stand-point and applied it to find out the oneness of mind and matter. In the one case religion in India became as

art and in the other case religion assumed the aspect of a science. The one is beautiful and the other is sublime, though the ultimate background is the same. The greatest Indian Psychologists of the first School are Abhinavagupta, Bhaskara Raya, Kalikacharana, while the other school is represented by Patanjali and his followers. Sankara compromises both the Schools. He is both a ritualist as well an abstract philosopher. I am indebted to the former School for the *modus operandi* in my experiments. It is already mentioned that mind was never the end in the study of Psychology but it was studied as a means to realise the grand concepts of religion and consequently the development of psychology was unlike that of Europe which has no religious basis. The study of animal magnetism was only a stage in the study of the psychology of the mind. The oriental psychologists were adepts in this branch of practical studies and applied the science of animal magnetism in the art of healing diseases. According to the Indian Schools, mind is by itself dull and insentient and if it appears to be conscious it is only due to the existence of a soul which may be said to be the ultimate consciousness, i. e., the mind only sheds the reflected light of the soul. The mind has a function which consists in the process of mentation or thought which is ultimately realised in the consciousness. The relation of thought to language is of an inseparable kind. The thing signified and that which signifies are inseparable so far as the subjective consciousness is concerned. The sounds that are used to signify ideas are divided into vowels and consonants. The same idea may be expressed by simple sounds or a combination of different sounds. It may also be noted that the same idea may be expressed by either the combination of a long or short number of sound-syllables and that for practical experiments we use short combinations. Further research work may throw light on the laws that govern the time required for the translation of the idea into the language and also the relation between the sound combinations and the efforts required for their production. In using a short combination of sounds we use the least effort. There are various Sanskrit works on this branch of the subject which would help us in understanding the science of sounds.

A suggestion may be said to consist of a mental stimulus or a series of mental stimuli; for example "you sleep" or "you be insensible" are depressive mental stimuli signifying a complete idea. In order to understand the nature of the mental stimuli or suggestion, it is necessary to grasp the variety of stages at which an idea can exist. The condition in which an idea is fully expressed is one where there is a perfect arrangement of sounds signifying the idea. Before its expression too, this arrangement must exist, because unless the sound

combination is formed it can hardly be expressed. We may call the idea at this stage the potential idea. There is a peculiar physiological condition in the bodily system when a particular idea exists in a particular potential condition. All the muscles of the vocal organs are charged with that particular idea. The question arises how this idea is magnetised. By an effort of the will, we energise these ideas resulting in a change of the polarity of the forces underlying the idea and this energised idea is taken into the ocular centre of the operator. After energising the potential idea, the operator still keeps the forces up in order to produce the psychic interaction in the brain of the subject. So we find the force induced by the operator is spent (1) in supplying energy to the potential idea and this energised idea is the mental suggestion (2) indirectly in generating the psychomagnetic field by the transmission of the mental stimulus through space (3) in the production of the psychic tension in the body of the subject. An idea, as it is, cannot do physical work, unless it is magnetised as in the case of a magnetic operation or it is resolved into a nervous impulse capable of being transmitted through a nerve. The exact time when the psycho-physical transformation of the potential idea takes place in the former case is the time at which it begins to receive the energy raised up by self-induction.

The Indian Psychologists fix the time in which forces could be magnetised and made capable of transmission. It is already mentioned that, in normal conditions, the function of consciousness is to cognize only such thoughts as are brought into its plane by the faculty of mind. The sound forms begin to develop when the mind begins to function. Sounds are divided into two classes—into vowels and consonants. The vowels are again divided into short and long vowels. The force that is required to magnetise one short vowel is taken as one unit and the consonant as half-a-unit. They knew very early the connection between respiration and sound production. They consider correctly that an operator could ordinarily magnetise 20 short vowels in the course of one full inspiration. According to them a person under normal condition respire 21600 times a day consisting of 24 hours. When this is arithmetically reduced, we get that for one inspiration a person takes 4 seconds. (According to the latest measurements by Stetheograph it is 15 to 20 per minute; Clarkson and Farquharson. *Rhythm of Respiration*). For the purposes of magnetisation, the Indian psychologists fixed formulae, though arbitrary, upon certain principles derived from experience. They said that 20 units of force could be produced by a combination of 20 short vowels or its sound equivalents in 4 seconds. This is not an absolute rule but this is rule derived from the unifor-

mity of cases that came under their observation. When we look into the classical authors of oriental psychology it is found that the tendency in the construction of the formula is to use the shortest number of syllables. They recognise two important laws in the magnetisation of sounds.

(1) The shorter the number of the syllables, the greater the concentration of a single mental stimulus upon that syllable.

(2) The effect also varies the number of times the formula could be made the subject of repetition per unit of time.

Putting these laws together we can form the general rule that the inductive capacity of the operator varies inversely as the number of syllables used in the Formula and directly as the number of times of concentrating upon it per unit of time. It is difficult to understand the exact relation of the sound combinations to the idea represented by them. The languages are so numerous that it is not easy to master all of them so as to arrive at definite conclusions regarding these relations. The exact relation of sound to sense is a matter which future scholars ought to take up for study and research. On psychological grounds, I am seriously led to think, that certain relations, though at present cannot be exactly said what they are, exist between various sets of sound combination representing the same idea and the time during which these ideas transform into these sound combinations and the effort with which these combinations are formed in mind, which result from highly complex psychophysical processes. But this has no connection with the magnetisation of sounds. The psychologists only manipulate sound formations and combinations in a particular way to produce the magnetic effect upon an idea, though the relation existing between the idea and the sound combination is not known.

The mental stimuli or suggestion transmitted through space in a particular manner and their action upon the nervous system of man, must explain the rationale of the hypothesis that normally the direction of the forces in the human system is in a downward direction and the change in the directivity of these lines of force must account for the various psychic conditions under observation. We know that sleep is a condition in which the consciousness disconnects entirely from external activity and consequently the psycho-motor action is completely set at a standstill. Hypnosis is a condition which resembles sleep, but differs from it in as much as it is an induced one. Death is a condition where there is a permanent cessation of the transmission of regular impulses from the central system, to appropriate muscles, The central nervous system

is the starting centre of all impulses and we also know that this centre is not situated in the centre of the bodily system, but at one particular end of the body and also the direction of the impulses is regulated from that end. In certain cases, the central system, especially when sensory phenomena is concerned, acts as a receiving station, where impulses are received and new impulses are started. Where motor impulses are concerned, it is undoubtedly the starting place and impulses must start from that end initially and traverse through the motor nerves to other ends in the body. When man is in his erect position, it is obvious, that the motor impulses should start from up in a downward direction. The motor nerves have the special property of directing these impulses in this particular direction in the normal consciousness and this is due to the inherent property of the cellular force existing in the motor nerves. Since the impulses travel down along the motor nerves, the directivity of the cellular force must be in a downward direction. Now we know that pushes, pulls, are the results of muscular contraction under the action of will. In a push or pull, we find that muscular force is transformed into mechanical energy which becomes physically measurable. If force could be supposed to be represented by lines of force, it may reasonably be supposed that when a muscle normally contracts, the lines of force undergo also an appropriate change. The only thing that must be remembered is that the lines of force undergo their changes with their direction in a downward direction. The polarity of forces exist actively during normal consciousness and during sleep none of the magnetic phenomena could take place under the action of the will. So it can be rightly inferred that sleep is a condition where there is a change in the directivity of force and consciousness is a condition, where the reverse state of thing exist.

It is an admitted fact that heat, light, sound, electricity are different forms of the same energy which are different kinds of molecular motion in varying degrees. A magnetic operation closely shows that Energy can appear itself in another form as in the shape of a mental stimulus capable of being transmitted through space in a particular direction and doing work at the point of destination. If once it is conceded that mind is something like dull and insentient matter and is separate from the noumenal consciousness of man and has only a phenomenal sentiency due to the existence of an ultimate conscious entity, then we may arrive at the possibility of explaining more on a physical basis all the phenomena generally considered a vital motion, thereby making an attempt to sound the very depths of the unfathomable. One or the other of the conclusions must be

arrived at from the magnetic experiments that either mentation is a series of highly complex physical processes taking place apart from the consciousness or that all the physical events taking place in nature are in a way connected with psychical processes which evade the human observation and scrutiny. Light is an electro-magnetic phenomenon and electric radiation obeys the laws of light. We also faintly see, that in the case of the transference of a mental stimulus, there is the possibility of electric changes taking place at the points of origination and destination and further research work may prove to the psychologist, that the psycho-physical radiation of the mental stimulus is also intimately connected with the electro-magnetic phenomena of the physicist. There is every chance of our coming to a common region where the physicist and the psychologist will have to step into each other's place, though unwillingly.

Psychological Anaesthesia has its own importance, in the hands of the psychologist especially to probe into the mystery of the nature of self-suggestion. It gives a clue to understand the analogous sub-conscious states. To the physician and surgeon it may not be of much use owing to the existence of chemical anaesthetics. The practical value of research work upon the study of this phenomenon cannot be better stated than in the words of Sir Oliver Lodge, who says "why should not psychical investigation lead to practical results? Are we satisfied with our treatment of criminals? As civilized people are we content to grow a perennial class of habitual criminals and to keep them in check only by devices appropriate to savages; hunting them, flogging them, locking them up, exterminating them? Any savage race in the history of the world could do as much as that; and if they know no better they are bound to do it for their own protection. Society cannot let its malefactors run wild, any more than it can release its lunatics. Till it understands these things it must lock them up, but the sooner it understands them the better; an attempt at comprehension is being made by criminologists in Italy, France, and elsewhere. Force is no remedy: Intelligent treatment is. Who can doubt but that a study of obscure mental facts will lead to a theory of the habitual criminal to the tracing of his malady as surely as malaria has been traced to the mosquito? And once we understand the evil the remedy will follow. Already hypnotic treatment or treatment by suggestion, occurs to one; and quite normal measures of moral improvement can also be tried. The fact of imprisonment ought to lend itself to brilliant efforts at reform: Such efforts are the only real justification for destruction of

liberty. The essence of manhood is to be free for better or for worse, free—and coercion is only justified if it is salutary. It is a great advantage to doctors to have their patients collected compactly in a hospital—and without it medical practice would languish; it ought to be a similar advantage—a similar opportunity—to have criminals herded together in gaols, and lunatics in asylums. It is unwise and unscientific to leave prisoners merely to the discipline of warders and the preaching of chaplains. That is not the way to attack a disease of the body politic. I have no full blown treatment to suggest, but I foresee that there will be one in the future. Experiments are already being made in America, in the prisons of Elmira and Concord—experiments of hope, if not yet of achievement. Society will not be content always to employ methods of barbarism; the resources of civilization are not really exhausted, though for centuries they have appeared to be. The criminal demands careful study on the physical side and remedy or palliation will be a direct outcome of one aspect of our researches. The influence of the unconscious or subliminal self, the power of suggestion, the influence of one mind over another, the phenomena of so-called “possession”—these are not academic or scientific facts alone; they have a deep practical bearing and sooner or later it must be put to the proof.” The study of animal magnetism is sure to throw light on the inherent tendencies of man because it is only by the use of magnetic methods that it is possible to bring the innate tendencies into action, thereby making them capable of observation and comprehensive examination.*

STORY OF SRI SANKARACHARYA'S LIFE (YOUTH)

(Continued from Page 374)

By Swami Atulananda

Gradually, Sankara's reputation spread far and wide. He was held to be the greatest intellect of his time. Rumours of his fame, it is written, reached even Siva-loka. There the ancient sage Vyasa (who, when he was on earth, had classified the Vedas and had himself written many Puranas) heard about it. It was told him that at last a perfect commentary had been written on the Vedanta scriptures, and that the Vedas were being expounded according to the highest interpretation ever vouchsafed to man, and all this was being done

* Read at the late Science Congress, Calcutta.

by a boy, for Sankaracharya (Sankara the teacher, as he was now called), was then only sixteen years old.

Vyasa had the desire to see and test that wonderful boy. He therefore, came to earth, and disguised as an old Brahmin, one day, entered Sankaracharya's Ashrama. He saw the young preceptor seated under a shady tree, surrounded by his eager disciples, all dressed in the fire-coloured robes of Sannyasins. It was a pleasing sight. Sankara's face glowed with enthusiasm, and his voice rang clear as he explained the subtle meaning of one of the most difficult Upanishads.

Vyasa drew near, Sankara rising from his seat received him with great kindness and courtesy. Out of respect for his old age, he offered the venerable visitor his own seat. Vyasa, however, declined the honour. He preferred to take his place amongst the disciples, and he begged Sankara to continue his discourse.

Now, as Sankara proceeded, the old Brahmin began to ply him with puzzling questions. So subtle were these questions, that Sankara realized that he was pitched against an intellect in no way inferior to his own. It put him on his mettle, all his arguments were disputed. It turned into a hot debate. The Brahmin did not give in, neither did Sankara. It seemed they would never arrive at any conclusion. Bath, food, even time itself, were forgotten. The day passed, the night passed. Still the arguments went on, Sankara was amazed, who was this old man with such a prodigious intellect? Would he, or Sankara himself be defeated in the dispute? It was a great strain on his intellect. But the Brahmin seemed as fresh as when they began.

Sankara's disciples exhausted physically and mentally, one after the other slipped away. Only Sanandan remained. Though the discussions often went beyond his intellect he would not desert his beloved master. Silently he prayed that Sankara might come out victorious in the end.

Then, through the strength of his Guru-bhakti, the truth was revealed to him. He understood that the old Brahmin was no other than Vyasa himself, come in disguise to test his preceptor. It was God's play—God in the person of the Brahmin; God in the person of his Guru. "Revered Sir," he addressed Sankara, "these discussions will not lead anywhere. You are Hari, and the Brahmin is Hara (both names of God). Your disputes will never come to an end."

This opened Sankara's eyes. In a flash he now also understood which it all meant. Overjoyed, he bowed low before the Brahmin, and humbly took the dust of his feet.

Vyasa also was transported with delight. He was convinced that Sankara could never be defeated in argument, that he would be a great reformer, that he would preach religion in its purest form. "My son," he said, "you have upheld the glory of Vedanta. I bless you. When you were born, the life allotted you was only eight years. When you took Sannyasa, eight years were added to it. Now another sixteen years I allot to you. In these years you will establish your doctrine over the whole of India. You will proclaim the highest truth, and thousands of men will profit by your preaching. As the lion conquers all other animals, even so let the lion of Vedanta conquer all inferior beliefs. Gird your loins, and rest not till your task is finished" Then Vyasa vanished from sight.

This miraculous incident inspired Sankara with new enthusiasm; and Vyasa's parting words filled his heart with confidence and hope for the future. He felt that the time had come to extend his work. The country, he thought, was ready to hear him, and accept his new dispensation. But he also realized that only with the greatest effort would he succeed, for mighty spiritual leaders, preaching their own doctrines, stood in his way. These he had to win over to his side before he could hope to influence the masses. He, therefore, called his disciples together, and in consultation with them, decided on his plan of campaign.

Thus far, Sankara had preached only in Benares. Now he would travel to the four corners of India, challenging all comers to meet him in debate, that they might decide which of the contending parties held the truer interpretation of the scriptures. He would, however, make the condition that the one who lost in the contest should attach himself to the victorious party.

Sankara would present his own firm conviction that God is the only reality in existence, that all else is Maya, or relative—a passing and ever-changing state of consciousness; and that self-realization, or Atma Jnanam, is the supreme means to Mukti, or freedom of the soul.

This being decided, Sankara and his disciples made ready for the journey, a long journey that—as we shall see—occupied the rest of Sankara's life, and was crowned with overwhelming success. For in the end all Sankara's opponents had to bow down before his gigantic intellect and spiritual insight,

During their travels, Sankara and his party met with wonderful experiences. So one day they came to the Ashrama of one Kumarilla Bhatta, a man of vast erudition and impeccable character. He was

an advocate of the Karma Kanda, the belief that sacrificial offerings performed according to strict scriptural rules, and with a pure heart, leads man to liberation.

Kumarilla had done much to put down the nefarious practices of his time. He was a preceptor of wide influence, honoured and respected by all. He had a very large following, and had established many Ashramas that were in charge of competent disciples. Kumarilla was a blessing for his time, for we must remember that the degraded Buddhists were then almost all-powerful. The priests and monks wielded an enormous power over the ignorant masses who feared them. Through the exercise of black magic they could perform strange deeds that frightened the people. Their Ashramas were places of vice. Even human life was not respected, for the priests believed that by drinking the blood of healthy, strong boys, they could prolong their lives. Young girls were taken from their homes, and unless they submitted to the lustful demands of the beastly monks, were cruelly tortured. Kumarilla had done a great and noble work in stamping out these wicked practices.

Thus the way had been prepared. It was now left to Sankara to build on the foundations laid by Kumarilla, and to introduce a higher interpretation of the Vedic scriptures.

Sankara was, therefore, very anxious to meet this great scholar and reformer, and to convince him of the superiority of Advaita Vedanta over the Karma Kanda. For should Kumarilla accept Sankara's view, his numerous followers would easily fall in line. The victory would give Sankara prestige, and would greatly advance his cause.

Now a very strange thing happened. It was only in the nick of time that Sankara met Kumarilla. When he reached his Ashrama a most astonishing scene met Sankara's sight. A terrible human drama was being enacted. Let us see what took place.

Kumarilla to accomplish his life's mission had found it necessary to learn the secrets by which the Buddhist leaders kept the masses under their control. As already mentioned, they practised black magic, and they justified their criminal deeds by subtle and sophisticated arguments. Now, Kumarilla in his youth had joined their ranks that he might learn their secret ways and their arguments. Afterwards he left them and defeated them with their own weapons. It was not a strictly honourable act, even though his motive was pure. Kumarilla being a man of conscience and integrity was not blind to this fact. Therefore, when he had firmly established a better

religious state of affairs, and he had made able disciples to carry on his work, he felt it his duty to atone for this fault in his conduct. He had acted like a hypocrite.

The atonement he planned was radical. Horrifying as it was, it certainly proved the sincerity and courage of the man. He reasoned that there was only one way to pay the debt of Karma he had incurred. He had to sacrifice his body at the altar of Truth.

In the body he had committed the sin of deceiving the Buddhists; the destruction of the body was the price he had to pay. And that not in the quickest and easiest manner, but by a slow and painful process.

Gathering around him his most intimate disciples, Kumarilla in solemn conclave revealed his secret intention. The disciples were dumfounded. They could hardly believe their ears. In confusion they looked at each other. They looked at their beloved master. His face was serene; he was in dead earnest.

When the first shock of the sad news had somewhat subsided, the disciples recovered their speech. They protested that such a slight offence, for a good cause, by no means merited the severe punishment their master had planned for himself. They argued that the master was stretching a point of honour beyond all reasonable measure. Their pleading was of no avail. They implored, they wept.

Kumarilla listened patiently to all they had to say, but he could not be shaken in his firm determination. At last he said, "My children, I know it is out of love that you try to put obstacles in my way. You have always trusted me, trust in me now. Long have I considered this act, a power greater than my own prompts me. Learn from me that truth must triumph; not falsehood. I have sinned against truth. I must pay the debt. Do no longer oppose me. Help me to be true, even unto the end."

Then the day was selected, the hour appointed. It was an auspicious day according to Hindu calculation, a day when the conjunction of heavenly bodies loomed propitious. It was the hour boding success in all undertakings. With sad hearts the disciples carried out their master's last instructions. There were rites to be observed, and sanctifying ceremonies to be performed. The scriptures had been consulted, and now all was complete, in readiness for the morrow.

Came early dawn. A crimson eastern sky announced the coming of day—the day of reparation. Kumarilla had kept vigil all night. He

had prayed and meditated. Now he rose for his early ablutions. A blood-red sun appeared on the horizon. With folded hands, for the last time, Kumarilla saluted the messenger of day, "O Pushan, O Sun, sole Traveller of the heavens, controller of all, collect thy golden rays and gather up by the burning effulgence, that I may behold thy true form. I am what Thou art. I am He."

The hour was drawing near. Kumarilla bade his disciples light a fire, a slow-burning fire. "Use the dry dung of the sacred cow," he said, "use no other fuel." Thus the ordeal was to be prolonged. The disciples obeyed, with trembling hands. All was ready.

"My sons," Kumarilla spoke to his disciples, "long have we lived together. Day and night you have been with me. If, perchance, we have ever offended each other, forgive me, as I forgive you. Faithfully you have served me. Remember my words and live the Truth. My blessings I leave with you." The disciples wept.

Kumarilla invoked the God of fire, "Agni, Lord of Fire, lead us to beatitude. O Lord, thou knowest all things. Keep us in the path of righteousness. The body ends in ashes. Mind, remember thy deeds. Prana (life breath) to Prana. The soul to the Immortal. Om! Praise, O Lord, unto Thee. Om! Peace, peace, peace."

Kumarilla circumambulated the fire, seven times, chanting the name of God. A last obeisance, and with firm step he mounted the pyre. There was dead silence, broken only now and then by sobs escaping from the afflicted disciples.

Kumarilla had seated himself in the midst of the smouldering fire, in Yoga posture. His mind withdraws from the body, was fixed on God. Like a statue he sat, erect, motionless, his eyes closed.

The disciples chanted softly, with fear-choked voices, hymns in praise of the Guru: "Salutation to the most excellent Guru who, by removing the darkness of ignorance, leads us to Knowledge and Truth. Salutation to the most excellent Guru who reveals to us the Almighty, the soul of our souls, the one who pervades all creation."

Then, there was a sudden commotion. A young Sannyasin with his following of disciples came hastening towards the spot. It was Sankara. Arrived at the Ashrama, the stench of burning flesh had guided him to the scene. The news of the great sacrifice had reached him. Now he took in the situation at a glance. Horrified he called to Kumarilla, "I have come to debate with you. Come from the fire. Together we shall preach the glorious truth of Vedānta,"

Sankara approached the pyre. But Kumarilla, roused from his meditation, motioned him back. "My days are over," he spoke unmoved. "I know who you are. Go to Mandan Misra and convince him. He is my foremost disciple. Take to him my blessings."

Kumarilla withdrew again within himself.

A sizzling sound came from the fire. Volumes of smoke enveloped Kumarilla's frame.

Sankara realized that it was too late. Silently he bowed his head to the earth, a last act of homage to the great teacher and reformer.

Slowly the flames crept up, licking the living flesh, consuming the body, charring the bones. When the vital parts were reached, Kumarilla collapsed. The body fell backwards. The soul severing its connection with the mortal had entered into eternal Bliss.

Sankara rose to his feet, and with vibrant voice sang the great Hymn of Liberation :

I am neither the body, nor the mind, nor the senses.

I am beyond sin and virtue, beyond pleasure and pain.

I am Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss Absolute.

I am He, I am He.

For me there is neither death, nor the fear of death.

Never was I born. I am all-pervading.

I am Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss Absolute.

I am He, I am He.

I am without form or limit, beyond time and space.

I am the foundation of the universe.

I am Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss Absolute.

I am He, I am He. * * *

The disciples were heart-stricken. Sankara consoled them, and assisted them in the performance of the last rites for the departed. When the fire had cooled down, the master's ashes were carefully collected, and with impressive ceremonies were consigned to the bosom of the sacred stream—the same stream in which Kumarilla had so long performed his daily ablutions.

Leaving the bereaved disciples in charge of the Ashrama, Sankara and his followers continued their journey.

(To be continued)

NOTES AND COMMENTS

ROMAIN ROLLAND ON SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND VIVEKANANDA

The February issue of the *Prabuddha Bharata* gives us an interesting piece of conversation between Mr. Dilip Kumar Roy and the renowned thinker and writer of France Romain Rolland, while they were in Switzerland. As our readers might be aware Monsieur Romain Rolland is well familiar with the thought currents of our land and has a genuine love and affection for our motherland. Sometime back he brought out a biography of Mahatma Gandhi. Pursuing his study of the philosophic thought of India he came across the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Swami Vivekananda. He was so much fascinated by these two personalities that he sent for all the available literature on the subject and even wrote to His Holiness Swami Shivanandji, the President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission for some personal touches of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa.

Addressing Dilip Kumar Roy Romain Rolland said that he was writing a book about Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. "I wonder, Monsieur Rolland," said Dilip Kumar Roy in reply, "how you could grow enthusiastic about them (Ramakrishna and Vivekananda) even from this vast distance across the seas and in spite of your lack of knowledge of English!"

Romain Rolland :—"How could I be anything but enthusiastic about such great souls? The radiant strength, the glowing self-respect, nay the fortifying confidence in the innate Divinity of Man,—are they nothing? They are assets to mankind, the value of whose inspiration can hardly be overrated;—but about Sri Ramakrishna, well, one must write a little cautiously about him. For he can never be entirely acceptable to Europe, you know. A good deal has to be presented in a new light—in a new interpretation that is."

Dilip Kumar Roy :—"But why?"

R. R. :—"For a variety of reasons, one of the chief of which is the bad atmosphere that has been created by Theosophy."

D. K. R. :—"What do you mean?"

R. R. :—"Well, you see, Theosophy has served to vulgarise Hinduism. Thanks to it, a good many of your loftiest teachings sound like cheap common places, odd, fantastic and bizarre. It has

besides rendered it easy for people to scoff at Asia,—a past time which affords unqualified delight to so many chauvinists in our country."

D. K. R. :—"Aurobindo has written in one of his books that the birth of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda is to be looked upon as an event in India, of which but few of us have realised the full import so far."

R. R. :—"I fully agree, and I cannot but feel that we shall respond to the utterances of Vivekananda ; if he is properly presented in Europe. You will be surprised to learn, Dilip, that Tolstoy was deeply impressed by Vivekananda towards the end of his life. Not only that. There are many people in Russia, like Tolstoy's great friend, Paul Birukoff, who treasure the messages of Vivekananda."

D. K. R. :—"I am so glad to hear it, Monsieur Rolland:"

* * * *

* * * *

"What is exactly that you admire especially on Vivekananda?"

R. R. :—"O, so many things ; for one thing the wonderful directness of his appeal, that serves as a sort of tonic. His words pierces the heart like arrows. And then his iridescent confidence in man, to say nothing of his marvellous power of achieving things—once he sets his heart upon them. He strikes me as a Napoleonic character in the spiritual realm. And I marvel at the vision of Ramakrishna when he discerned greatness in the youthful stripling at the very first sight.

"Only I wonder why the great men of modern India do not feel a similar impulse in the direction of social service, I mean the sort of uplifting work for the masses, the task which Vivekananda had set his heart upon latterly and which he left unaccomplished due to his premature death. Why do not your great leaders, like Gandhi for instance, take more seriously to this urgent work that is before you all?"

"What a soul ! What deep compassion for the lowly ! What pervading sympathy for the down-trodden ! Above all, what reverence for the meanest of the mean, looking upon the dispossessed as God incognito ! To me the dramatic aspect of Vivekananda's life seems elevating indeed,—the struggle, that is, between the individual thirsting after personal salvation and the altruist craving for self-dedication for the suffering humanity !

Mademoiselle Rolland (His sister):—"True, only it often seems to me that Ramakrishna never suffered from this sort of struggle."

R. R.:—"The reason is not far to seek, for Ramakrishna, though grand in the realm of the spirit was a far less complex personality comparatively speaking."

D. K. R.:—"Do you think that Vivekananda would appeal to Europeans in the near future?"

R. R.:—"I do; but only to those who have feeling and imagination. His inspiring confidence in the ultimate Divinity of Man is bound to evoke a response in such people all the world over. His appeal is so direct and vibrant, don't you see? That is why I have decided upon writing a book about Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. Only the difficulty is that the material that has accumulated is terrifying. To sort things out of such a voluminous collection is a task indeed."

D. K. R.:—"What is it in the messages of Ramakrishna that appeal to you most, if I am not inquisitive?"

R. R.:—"His breadth and catholicity, the universality of his doctrines, which crosses all geographical limits. This is what I call real religion, real vision. A man who hardly knew how to read and write, a man who was by no means extraordinary in his analysis of matters secular, a man who was born provincial,—how could such a man have such a marvellous vision and comprehension of things universal? Here he seems to me not only great but towering."

D. K. R.:—"You will be glad to know, Monsieur Rolland that Aurobindo fully endorsed this view of yours. He says that a Yogi of such calibre is a rarity even among the elect of the mystics."

R. R.:—"I agree whole-heartedly."

CAN PROPAGANDISTS SUPPRESS INDIA'S CULTURE?

"The East is East, the West is West and the twain never can meet," so sang Britain's famous noble prize winner, Rudyard Kipling. And of this poet writes a notable American in one of his recent books; 'This man is one of the tragedies of our literature because he has so many of the great qualities, energy, story-telling power, singing fervour. But his mind stopped growing, and he stayed a boy—a hateful dangerous, and bloody minded boy, dreaming of killing the people whose minds persist in growing beyond his own. He called it the 'white man's burden,' the task of making all colored men into his servants.' Many such people endowed with great qualities are there in the West to-day who inspite of the favourable opportunities present to them could

not outgrow their colour, race or religious prejudices of the people amongst whom they were born, and these 'cultured' people have contributed not a little in the fostering of hatred and discord amongst the different peoples that inhabit this earth. One of these 'cultured' people spread broadcast sometime back that Christianity was the only basis of all civilization and when they came to nations where Christianity had not penetrated there was no civilization at all. If Christian civilization meant the machine gun and the submarine the writer was quite right. If Christian civilization meant Mammon worship then this writer was not to blame. It is this glamour of power and the glamour of wealth that make these writers sing 'Hallelujahs' on Christ and not because he taught them to love one's neighbour as oneself or live in the spirit and walk in the spirit or worship God, not Mammon. The spirit of Christ one hardly finds in their boasted culture and civilization which the West wants the East to adopt. True Christ spirit is not a stranger to the East; for the Christ too was an Easterner; and to-day the West is dinning into her ears that she should adopt Europe's 'kultur' for pulling down the haughtiness of the West. Japan took to it and brought Europe to her knees. Turkey adopted it and Europe stands to-day in reverence before her. China has taken it and the European battalions that threatened her with eternal subjection are getting withdrawn and the laws of the Chinese are getting respected. These Westerners are dinning into India's ears for centuries past that Western 'kultur' should be recognised in this land as well. That she may take her sword and perish by the sword. One of these well-wishers of India Colonel Holditch declared sometime back in his book on 'India' that Modern Hinduism is the most contemptible religion in existence while a bishop told us that the "Sacred Books of the East" was nothing 'sacred' but 'gibberish.' Such criticisms are getting repeated year after year. The literary and dramatic critic of note Mr. Williams Archer writing only a few years back in his '*India of the future*' said that India was "barbarian," that Indian civilization was 'barbarism' miscalled and the people of that land was 'barbaric' and that 'they are not a civilized people.' And the latest arrival into this field of unjust criticism is Miss Mayo who despising everything Indian thinks that she has done her part by her '*Mother India*' to perpetuate the glory of the Occident. A careful study of these books will show their readers how dishonest, misleading and provocative such books have been. In fact these writers have been carried away by Western imperialistic notions and not anything Christian; and they have been the devout apostles of white domination. Even

brilliant English writers like a Chesterton or a Bernard Shaw who having had the opportunity to study and understand the East have refused to study the East is what astonishes us and makes us declare that 'something is rotten in the West.' William James was an American, Schopenhauer a German, Materlinck a Belgian, Tolstoy a Russian, some of the world's admittedly greatest thinkers. William James could tell us of Vivekananda as a paragon of Vedantists while only an American woman could dismiss him as a 'modern teacher of the spiritual sense of the Phallic cult'. A Schopenhauer could declare that the Upanishads gave him the solace of his life, only an Englishman speak of the same as 'crude' 'contemptible.' In the oft criticised doctrine of Karma only a Materlinck could see "the only satisfactory solution of life's injustices." Nationalism, Chauvinism, Imperialism have been the background for this belittling wholesale of all that is great elsewhere. And that is why Romain Rolland the great thinker and writer of France says that Europe is losing all interest in things Asiatic. This regrettable feature had affected even the elite of Europe. Declared this great thinker that even the society bearing Schopenhauer's name had been affected by the narrow prejudices of the West. M. Romain Rolland in the course of a conversation with Mr. Dilip Kumar Roy said that he was taken back when a 'big gun of the Schopenhauer society did not know who Vivekananda was.' To such a pass has Europe fallen. But in Romain Rolland we have the picture of one whom the same Europe looks upon with love and reverence and who has taken upon himself the task of disabusing the West of her foolish notions and of bringing peace and good will amongst mankind. Our consolation is that Truth ultimately prevails and that some of Europe's greatest philosophers and thinkers have understood the East and, to that class belonged Schopenhauer, Materlinck and Tolstoy. And we hope that these attacks on everything Indian will lead only to its defence and appreciation.

THE HINDU VIEW OF CONVERSION

"Born aliens have been converted in the past by crowds and the process is still going on," so Swami Vivekananda is reported to have said in the course of a conversation. How this proselytization of the various aboriginal tribes such as the Ahir, Dom, Dosadh of the United Provinces, the Guzar, Jat of the Punjab and many other tribes in this country was brought about, the *Hindu Mission Bulletin* for February has rightly pointed out in its article on the aborigines of India. It was, it correctly says by, "a process of peaceful penetration by slow cultural intercourse." The journal adds, "They did

not solve the social, religious, and language problem to create a united nation by a policy of extermination of the conquered but preserved them, gave them the liberty of speech, faith and worship and assigned to them a suitable place in the social whole, to live and work side by side in peace and order and by obliterating the differences absorbed them by friendly intercourse." Unlike the Western races the Hindu never practised the policy of social, moral or religious conquest of tribes differing in culture from their own. The peculiar genius of the Hindu has always been in the direction of gradually assimilating and even absorbing into their all-embracing fold. Due to changing fortunes this peaceful movement towards unification ceased, it would appear, two centuries back and to-day therefore we find in the census that about sixteen millions of these aboriginal tribes spread out in all India and especially in Assam, Bihar, Orissa, Central India and Burma, are termed Animists. The largest population of the so-called Animists belong to Central India with a population of over a million and are known as the Bhils. Assam has over a million of these 'Animists.' The Bulletin points out that the only difference between them and an Orthodox Hindu is that the Hindu Samskaras have not been able to strike deep roots in their minds. This fact is also attested by the workers of the Ramakrishna Mission amongst the hill tribes of Assam. That the Swami Vivekananda held strong views as regards this subject is obvious from his speeches and writings. But to him conversion did not merely mean an outside conversion—but a conversion of the heart though he recognised formal Samskaras as when he said, "go and found schools among them and invest them with the 'sacred thread.'" Men imbued with the true spirit of Vedanta working amongst these people, ministering to their material and spiritual welfare alone can bring about the desired change. This alone can check the meaningless and even harmful conversion to Christianity conducted under the aegis of organised Missions of the West.

NEWS AND REPORTS

BIRTH-DAY CELEBRATION OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AT MADRAS

In connection with the Sixty-sixth Birthday Anniversary of the great Swami Vivekananda the Sri Ramakrishna Math, Brodies Road, Mylapore, Madras performed a double function—the *Tithipuja* and the Public Celebration. The *Tithipuja* which fell this year on the 14th January was duly observed with special Pujas, Bhajana and offerings. On the Public Celebration day, the 22nd January, a big

The Sri Ramakrishna Math and Mission Head quarters, Belur, Howrah ; Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Basavangudi, Bangalore City ; Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Mysore ; Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Gandhipet, Guntur ; Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama 'Jaffna, Ceylon ; Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Khar, Bombay ; Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Rajkot ; Sri Ramakrishna Math, Delhi ; Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Patna ; Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Cawnpore ; The Ramakrishna Mission, Barisal ; Sri Ramakrishna Math, Baliati, Dacca ; The Ramakrishna Sevashram, Chittagong. The devotees of Ranchi in Behar and of Cambay, Tarapur and Godhra in Gujarat also celebrated the thrice-holy day.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE R. K. MISSION RETURNS

Srimat Swami Shivanandaji Maharaj, President, the Ramakrishna Mission who went out on a tour to the north last September, returned to the Head quarters on the 19th February last. The Swamiji was received at the Howrah station by a large number of Sadhus and devotees, including the Secretary of the R. K. Mission. During this long tour, the Swamiji visited, Madhupur, Patna and Benares.

SWAMI PARAMANANDA'S ARRIVAL

Swami Paramananda, the head of the Vedanta Society of Boston, U. S. A. arrived at Belur, the R. K. Mission Head quarters on the 14th February last. On his way the Swami halted at Singapore, Kuala Lumpur and Rangoon. Some Western friends of the Swami have also accompanied him.

THE R. K. MISSION GUJARAT FLOOD RELIEF

Having carried on the flood relief for full six months the Ramakrishna Mission has closed the work of all the five centres—Cambay, Sayama, Tarapur, Indernej and Golana in Gujarat on the last 5th February. The total number of houses constructed and repaired in British, Baroda and particularly in Cambay State villages amounts to 916. The Relief party arrived at Bombay on the 7th February.

AN APPRECIATION OF R. K. MISSION'S WORK

The citizens of Cambay presented a public farewell address to the Ramakrishna Mission on the 5th February at the Jugaldas Jagannath Gymkhana in appreciation of the splendid service rendered by the Mission in Cambay, Baroda and British territories in connection with the fateful devastation brought about by the last Gujarat Flood. V. K. Namjoshi, Esquire, B. A., C. S., Administrator, Cambay State presided over the function,

portrait of Swami Vivekananda was tastefully decorated with flowers, garlands and ferns on a raised platform in the spacious Hall of the Math. As usual Bhajana in Marhathi, Tamil, Hindustani and Sanskrit, Harikatha, feeding of the devotees and the poor Narayanas, discourses on the life and teachings of the Swami, distribution of Prasadam and lectures formed the main items of the programme. In the noon about three thousand poor were given the pleasure of one full meal. In the evening after a lecture in Tamil on the life and mission of Swami Vivekananda by Swami Avinashananda, Mr. A. Ramaswami Mudaliar, the Editor of *the Justice* delivered an eloquent address on the spiritual message of the illustrious Swami with the Hon. Mr. Justice V. V. Srinivasa Iyengar in the Chair.

In the course of his prefatory remarks the President said that Swami Vivekananda was the incarnation of the spirit of Vedanta. He brought the experience of his life and knowledge to bear upon the exposition of the Upanishads. He was the fore-runner of the unity of India. In the Parliament of religions he stood for India. The various problems facing India to-day were bound to be solved only by the application of the central principles of Vedanta for which India stood. He taught India national self-respect; and the study of his life and teachings were very profitable indeed.

Mr. A. Ramaswami Mudaliar explaining some principles of Swami Vivekananda's teachings said that transcendent love was the characteristic of the Swami. He was the Avatar of the Vedantic spirit and to him the Vedas were everything. All the lessons he needed were in the Vedas. He felt that the religion of the Vedas was not a religion of India, but a universal religion. Every man was entitled to his religion and Swami Vivekananda carried it to the outer world.

The message of Swami Vivekananda was unity. There was that atom of the same God-head in every living being and by looking down upon any one they looked down upon themselves. If they understood this basic principle, there was no room for disunity or dissensions. Swami Vivekananda looked forward to the day when the Hindu thought would spread all over the world. That had partly happened. They could see in the latter day culture and philosophy of the West the touch of Hinduism and Hindu Philosophy.

AT OTHER PLACES

The Anniversary was celebrated at many places in India and abroad. We have received information from the following Maths, Ashramas, Societies, etc.;—

THE VEDANTA KESARI

“ Let the lion of Vedanta roar.”

“ Let me tell you, strength is what we want
And the first step in getting strength is to uphold
The Upanishads and believe that ‘ I am the Atman’ ”.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

Vol. XIV]

APRIL 1928

[No. 12

PRAYER

ॐ

नमामि भक्तवत्सलं कृपालुशीलकोमलम् ।

भजामि ते पदाम्बुजं श्यामिनां स्वधामदम् ॥

तमेकमद्भूतं प्रभुं निरीहमीश्वरं विभुम् ।

जगद्गुरुञ्च शाश्वतं तूरीयमेकैवल्यम् ॥

भजामि भाववल्लभं कुयोगिनां सुदुर्लभम् ।

स्वभक्तकल्पपादपं समस्तसेव्यमन्वहम् ॥

अरूपरूपभूपतिं नतोऽहमुर्विजापतिम्

प्रसीद देहि मे विभो पदाब्जभक्तिमाशुते ॥

Salutation unto Thee, my Lord of compassion, gracious and sweet ; Thou Lord of marvellous deeds, gentle, rich and mighty ; Thou one Teacher of man, eternal, blissful and pure ; salutation unto Thy lotus feet, the ambrosia of the selfless ones.

Adoration unto Thee, my Lord of love Whom the worldly-minded cannot reach, but Who art to the devotees like the Wishing-tree, and Who art worshipped by all ; Thou Lord of the universe, Father of us all, Thou Who art formless and with forms withal ; adoration unto Thee.

Have mercy upon me, O Lord, and pray grant me devotion to Thee.

TULSIDAS.

SPIRITUAL TALKS OF SWAMI BRAHMANANDA

Q. Maharaj, how does yearning become intensified?

A. Through steady spiritual practices with a mind purified by the influence of holy company and the instruction of the Guru (preceptor). In this world even in the art of stealing a Guru (teacher) is required. And how greater must be the necessity of a Guru for acquiring this supreme knowledge of the Brahman. Going to holy men something ought to be asked of them.

Q. How can one attain peace?

A. Peace is synchronous with the sincere love of God,—and true faith. At the very start how can one attain peace? At first restlessness, yearning and intense pain for not having seen Him;—just as, the greater the thirst, the sweeter the water. Restlessness has to be stirred up. When man does not find happiness in the world, then grow restlessness and attachment to Him.

Q. How can love of God grow?

A. By Sadhana and prayer—thus have attained all.

Q. Is it not possible by being in the 'world'?

A. Is there any one outside the 'world'?

Q. No, what I mean is by living in the family.

A. Say that, then it is possible, but very difficult.

Q. When dispassion for the world comes up, should it be renounced?

A. Should! That is what is called Vairagyam—yes that is real Vairagyam (dispassion). Real Vairagyam is like unto the fire,—never extinguishes, rather gradually expands and gets intensified. Sri

Ramakrishna used to say, as a pond fish moves merrily, released from the pond, so is the man who has renounced the world ;—never does he want to be fettered again.

Q. Is it not possible without a Guru ?

A. I think, not ; and can never be. Guru means one who shows the path to the Isthm (God)—as through a Holy Name (Mantram). Upa-guru (intermediaries) can be many. But the supreme Guru is one that commands : "Practise these Sadhana and move with holy men." In olden times, the custom was to live with the Guru. The Guru would 'watch' the pupil and the pupil would serve him. And When the pupil would go astray, the Guru would bring him back. So, none but the knower of the Brahman or one that has far advanced in Sadhana should you choose as your Guru.

Q. How to know him ?

A. By moving with him closely for some time can you know him. The Guru too will watch his would-be disciple. If the disciple possesses strong desire for enjoyment and could not be easily brought round—him the Guru will not initiate. He will turn him back. And whom the Guru chooses, will he keep with him and watch. About the family preceptor the one advantage is that he knows everything regarding the family to which the disciple belongs.

The way to focus the mind—prayer and worship, concentration and meditation. Pranayama (control of breath) too is a way, but not safe for the householder—the loss of vital fluid brings about diseases. Good food, good place and pure air—these are necessary,—no other 'condition' for meditation. For meditation solitariness has to be practised—not for an

hour or for a day;—the more you practise the more benefited you will be. Go wherever you may, if you find it a good place and good ‘scenery’ be there. Seek Him and Him alone. And Kamini-Kanchana (lust and gold) too you have to give up. First renunciation in the mind—draw in the mind first from earthly things.

In the beginning Sakara (with form), then Nirakara (formless) and then ‘Brahman is real and all else is illusion.’ The world as it appears to us is all illusion. In Samadhi the world does not exist—(only bliss)—as after deep sleep a man says, ‘In great joy I was.’ When a man descends (from Samadhi), only then, like unto the Rishis does he say of his experience, ‘bliss and bliss only’; and words cannot ‘explain’ that. Then ‘I’ and ‘Thou’ all vanish—Sachchidananda (Existence-knowledge-bliss Absolute) alone! “What is the proof that God is” if thus questioned, the answer will be: “We have seen God, and you too can see Him if you follow us.” So have said the saints and saviours all. As Sri Ramakrishna has said: “By merely uttering the name of Siddhi (hempleaves) you cannot get yourself intoxicated. Bring it, grind and dissolve it, drink it, and wait for a while, then alone will you feel intoxicated. In the same way simply crying out ‘Lord’ and ‘Lord’ will not do, practise Sadhana and wait.

- Q. In performing Japam sometimes I forget everything; what is that, Sir?
- A. The *Panchadashi* is of opinion, it stands as an impediment. Meditation is to think of Him; and when it gets intensified, when God becomes visible, it is Samadhi. After Samadhi the blissful emotion lingers on for a long time. Some opines, it continues for ever.. Have you not heard, the Saint of

Sundarbans, when forced to eat after being brought back from Samadhi by pulling him by the tongue, died of diarrhoea. Through Hata-Yoga the mind becomes calm and steady,—and no troubles regarding food and nourishment therein.

Sri Chaitanya sent a man to Ramananda. He (Ramananda) lived a life of luxury. But at the name of the Lord burst forth a fountain (of devotion) from within. They say, if you are not a Sadhu you cannot know a Sadhu—as a brinjal seller cannot appraise the value of a diamond.

Through Sadhana if a man attains to a higher stage, that he can surely understand. At the time of meditation you must think, desires and passions have no existence, unreal. Gradually will come up this impression. As you drive out these thoughts so are you to force in good ones. In your meditation some light or sound if you perceive, know that you are going along the right path. And these too are too trivial ; but then such signs are good. Meditating in a lonely place, one can hear the sound of Pranava (sound symbol of the Brahman) or that of a bell or a sound from a distant place. “ Thou art my goal, Oh Mother, art Thou my refuge ;”—this prayer of Sankara after his self-illumination was only for enlightening the world, to teach humanity that God can be realised through all paths.

A man, a dare-devil he was. Just fifteen minutes before his death he said : “ Carry me straight to the Ganges—Carry me thither. You think, I shall die here, do you ? ” And reaching the Sacred Stream he smiled and prayed : “ Most Sacred Ganges! that Thou art, have I sinned so much, I do believe, Mother, wouldst Thou wash and wipe away all. ”

EDITORIAL NOTES

Sri Ramakrishna's Attitude Towards Women

The least understood and the most misunderstood point in Sri Ramakrishna's life is his attitude towards womankind. Was he—a 'renouncer of Kamini or woman'—a mysoginist? Many a superficial critic is prone to look upon him as such. But those who have taken any trouble to realise the meaning of his Divine outlook cannot but regard him as a great vindicator of the glory of womanhood which to him was the embodiment of the Mother Divine. The tendency of the age is to dethrone woman—the mother, and to instal in her place woman—the opposite sex of man. The old ideals of restraint and control are being thrown to the winds. Sex is being idolised; sense life is being glorified. And as its result a most novel and horrible form of sex-immorality is having its hold in the minds of men and women. Popular poets and writers, who "travel with the multitude," are 'pandering to the vitiated taste of the people, to win fame and glory. But Sri Ramakrishna, the world-teacher, had a different role to perform. The mission of his wonderful life was to counteract the mad tendency of the times, to place before humanity the Divine ideal, and save them from destruction which they seem to be running headlong without any thought. And to achieve this end, he held, more than anything else, his own wonderful life as the glowing example of the ideal he wanted them to follow and realise.

The Meaning of his "Renunciation of Women"

With his eye always fixed on the Divine, Sri Ramakrishna could not look upon woman as a plaything or an object of sense-pleasure. He saw in her, as he saw in man, the image of the all-pervading God Whom he addressed as his Mother Divine. He thus renounced woman in all her carnal relations, but accepted her at the same time as

the embodiment of the Mother of the Universe. Even in dream never could he think of woman in any relation other than that of the Mother. And he saw Her in the Divine image of Kali he worshipped, in the person of the mother who gave birth to his body, and also in the living image of the holy lady with whom he was united in what the world calls marital bonds. Nay, he recognised Her in all, even in those whom society looks upon as fallen women. As he says, "women, whether chaste or unchaste, naturally good or bad, should be regarded as images of the Divine Mother." These were not vain words that the Master spoke, Even when put to the severest tests he did not swerve for a moment in the least from his ideal of Divine Motherhood, perfect purity and self-control. "The Self is neither male, nor female, nor neuter. It is called so according to the body which It takes up." To our materialistic and sceptical world the Master proved the great truth of the Upanishadic saying with a new power and meaning.

His Attitude Towards His Mother

True renunciation is not anti-social as some are inclined to suppose. It purges all social relations of their attachment and impurity, and fulfils them by spiritualising and intensifying them. Sankara—the great Vedantic philosopher, who held the world to be unreal and Brahman alone as the only Reality, Sri Chaitanya—the prophet of Divine Love—who loved God with a passion before which all worldly bonds vanished away into nothingness, both of them were men of strictest renunciation but possessed the tenderest love for their mothers. Sri Ramakrishna—the Paramahansa—one who had gone beyond what human society calls duties—was a most devoted son of his earthly mother to the last days of her life. He served her with infinite tenderness. And when he once wanted to settle down at Brindaban, it was the thought of his poor and afflicted mother that brought him back to her at Dakshineswar. As

he himself says—"I thought—who would look after her if I would remain at Brindaban? And it became impossible for me to stay away." A God-intoxicated man that he was, one who would lose all outer consciousness in Divine ecstasy, he never failed to spend some time every day with his mother and minister himself to her wants. In her death-bed he also made an offering of flowers at her feet in a spirit of divine worship. Indeed his was an instance of extraordinary filial affection and duty which our modern men and women will do well to imitate. And the secret of his devotion lay in the fact that he looked upon his mother as an embodiment of the Mother of the Universe.

His Discipleship Under a Lady-Teacher

Sri Ramakrishna—"the renouncer of woman"—accepted a remarkable lady of rare learning and spirituality as one of his teachers, and underwent with her help the most difficult practices of Tantra, although he usually advised his men devotees to avoid close association with women. And to remove any possible misunderstanding of his teachings and to uphold the glory of womanhood, he sat like a child at the feet of the holy Brahmani, as he used to call her, for spiritual instruction and guidance. He thus proved that there is nothing innate in woman, that stands in the way of man's spiritual progress. It is his attitude towards woman that ennobles or degrades him. When he looks upon her as an object of sense-gratification, her physical charms appealing to his senses maddens and ruins him spiritually. When, on the other hand, he regards her as the image of the Divine Mother, she being propitiated opens to him the gates to salvation. Both attraction and hatred for woman the Master condemned. As he said to a young disciple who used to look upon women with abhorrence, "Look down upon women! What for? They are the manifestation of the Divine Mother. Bow down to them as to your mother, and hold them in respect. That is the only way to escape their baneful influence. The more you

hate them, the more will you fall into the snare." Thus it is the Divine outlook that helps man not only to conquer his evil propensity but also to attain to the emancipation of his soul. The Master proved in his own life what a benign influence woman can shed on the life of man only when she is approached in a spirit of Divine worship, and not with the idea of the so-called honour shown to her youth and beauty, which is in fact an insult to true womanhood.

His Relation With His Wife.

This is best illustrated in Sri Ramakrishna's Divine relations with the high-souled lady who became the true partner of his spiritual life. The Master was married. But the marriage was not of the body but of the soul, not as a means of sense-gratification but as a help to Self-realisation. A Sannyasin of Sannyasins, he did not disown his relation with his wife, as he did not with his mother. He received her with great love and kindness when she came to join him at Dakshineswar. The husband and the wife lived together—he as a monk and teacher, and she as nun and disciple. Never did the mind of the holy couple come to the plane of sense. Never did the thought of physical enjoyment cross their minds. They looked upon each other as embodiment of the Divine; they saw in each other the sexless Atman, and proved the truth of Upanishadic saying—"The husband is loved not for his own sake but for the sake of the Atman dwelling in him. The wife is loved not for her own sake but for the sake of the Atman dwelling in her." Perfect sense-control, and through it Divine realisation, is the ultimate goal of the monk as well as of the house-holder. According to the sages of India, marriage is meant not for sense-pleasure, but for perpetuating the race. Through his experience of the transiency of physical enjoyment, the house-holder should renounce all material pleasure, and live a life of perfect control and spiritual striving with his partner. Propagation of the human species is going on mechanically,

more or less in the way of brutes. But the ideal of Brahmacharya or sex-control, religious practice and God-realisation, in married life is being almost entirely forgotten. And it was to prove the glory of this ideal that Sri Ramakrishna took upon himself the burden of marriage and lived the ideal life with his wife before the eyes of all. And he did it with the hope that men and women should at least hold the highest ideal before them and strive their best for its attainment.

Sri Ramakrishna and Holy Women.

Little is known of the numerous women disciples whose lives were completely transformed by the teachings of this wonderful "renouncer of woman." It will be a revelation to many to know that the lady devotees of the Master used to say—"We seldom looked upon Sri Ramakrishna as a member of the male sex. We always considered him as one of us. He was our best confident." They looked upon him with supreme devotion, sometimes verging on the Divine and were ever ready to follow his directions. To them, as to men, he placed the same ideal of renouncing animal passions and greed of wealth. And if he warned his men devotees against the charms of women, he also asked his women disciples to beware of the snares of men. To the married women, as to men, he said, "when a few children have been born, you should live like brothers and sisters." To the widow devotees, as to those who later on became his monastic disciples, he placed the ideals of strict Brahmacharya, of a life of perfect chastity and service. And many of them had the rare privilege of following under the Master's direct guidance strenuous religious practices that brought to them wonderful experiences of the Spirit. There was a great lady, who at first led a miserable life owing to family troubles, but later on forgot all her sorrows at the divine touch of the Master. Later on, she used to spend the greater part of her days in religious practices and would sometimes

lose herself in "Divine ecstasy." There was another high-souled lady who first came to the Master, sorely afflicted with the bereavement of her only daughter. She soon tasted the bliss of devotion, and became an object of marvel to many by her remarkable spiritual attainments. Again there was an old and pious lady, a widow from childhood, who used to look upon Sri Ramakrishna as her Divine child. She attained to such a high spiritual eminence that, as the Master said, she reached the end of her life's goal and had no more religious practices to follow. Indeed many of the women devotees had a high place in the estimation of the Master. And a few of these holy women, lived more or less continuously in the household of the Holy Mother, and were instrumental in spreading the message of Sri Ramakrishna particularly among women. But she whose influence was the greatest was the Holy Mother herself who may be said to be Sri Ramakrishna's final word as to the ideal of Indian womanhood.

The Holy Mother.

Wonderful was the life of her who was the partner of Sri Ramakrishna's Divine love and Divine knowledge. She realised the highest wisdom and infinite sweetness that she shed on all around her. And very truly has Sister Nivedita said—"The stateliness of her courtesy and her great open mind are almost as wonderful as her sainthood,.... she had long and arduous experience in administration, secular and religious. And it must be remembered that as the wife of Sri Ramakrishna she has had the highest opportunity of personal development that is possible to enjoy. At every moment, she bears unconscious witness to this association with the great." The all-round training she received from her Master eminently fitted her for furthering his Mission for more than three decades after his passing away. And verily she became the Holy Mother—at once spiritual mother and teacher—of thousand of her spiritual sons and daughters who constantly

sought her for inspiration and guidance. The universal mother heart in her throbbed with infinite love for every child born of woman. And it was this love that urged her to remove the miseries and sufferings of care-worn and world-weary souls, whether they looked or not to her for Divine happiness and bliss'. Through her Sri Ramakrishna not only vindicated the right of woman to lead a life of the highest chastity and Divine realisations like the Brahmavadinis of old, but also the right to take up spiritual ministration and leadership. And it was with her help again that he could present to the modern sex-obsessed world the ideal of the motherhood of woman and the highest ideal of married life—an ideal which it was not necessary to show in the lives of the great world-teachers of the past. The Divine Master and his illustrious partner have clearly demonstrated that the ideal of perfect continence and highest spiritual realisations could be lived not only by the unmarried, by the monk and the nun, but also by the married, by men and women who are sincerely eager to transmute their human relation into the divine. May the Divine outlook of Sri Ramakrishna find favour with our modern men and women ! May his noble teachings stem the tide of vice and immorality that is sweeping over the entire world ! And may this ideal of purity and spirituality lead our benighted mankind to the heaven of peace and blessedness !

SRI RAMAKRISHNA PARAMAHAMSA

As An Incarnation of the Indian Genius. *

By K. S. Ramaswami Sastri, B.A., B. L.

The time is now ripe for us to make a sober estimate of the life and work of one of the first minds of the last century. Till now it may be said that we were under the spell of what Max Muller has

* Read on the 93rd Birth-day Anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna, at the Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras.

called the dialogic process. Myth-making goes on apace in regard to all great men all over the world. While in modern countries and in modern times this tendency stops at the softening of outline and at *suppressio veri*, in India, all along and even to-day, it has shown a capacity for the making of legends. But after all what really counts in the life of each great man is his loyalty to the inward light and to the spreading of that light by him in the dark places of the world.

Judged by such a test, viewed in the dry light of the estimate of posterity, Sri Ramakrishna is seen to have a powerful and permanent appeal to all times and to all climes and has more potent and fascinating appeal to-day than he had at any time before. That he should have attained such a hold upon the Indian mind is hardly a matter for surprise because he was, as I shall show, a perfect incarnation of the Indian genius. But his influence is trans-Indian and trans-Asian as well. Men and women in distant countries which are now in the van of the world's progress are turning to him in an increasing measure for solace, uplift, and guidance. To take a typical instance, Nina McDonald asks in a recent poem about him :

“ Why doth our inmost being joyous thrill
In blissful rapture to Thy sacred name ? ”

Celebrations like this celebration and great men like this great man have a special value in India to-day. These are days of cultural attack on India from abroad and of cultural self-abasement within India. Miss Mayo's notorious book *Mother India* which has been well described by the Hon'ble Sir C. P. Ramaswami Iyer as a report about the swept rubbish-heaps in the garden of Indian culture is only the last of a series of cultural attacks in India. India is in sore danger of losing what was almost the only thing left intact in her keeping—*vis.*, her own beautiful and divine soul. Celebrations like the present and great men like Sri Ramakrishna restore to us the greatest of all our possessions—*vis.*, our self-possession. Through such an idealisation we realise ourselves. Each great man is a true mirror wherein the soul of the nation beholds itself and rejoices in its immortal loveliness of perennial youth.

What a delight it is to contrast the natures and the services to the cause of truth of two such persons as Miss Noble and Miss Mayo ! There is a real oppositeness in referring to Miss Noble better known as Sister Nivedita—in an address on Sri Ramakrishna. She was the most remarkable of the disciples of the most remarkable of the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. *The Web of Indian Life* and *Mother*

India—Look on this picture and on that ! Rabindranath Tagore says about Sister Nivedita : “ She had won her access to the inmost heart of our society by her supreme gift of sympathy. She did not come to us with the impertinent curiosity of a visitor, nor did she elevate herself on a special high perch with the idea that a bird's eye view is truer than the human view because of its superior aloofness. She lived our life and came to know us by becoming one of ourselves. She became so intimately familiar with our people that she had the rare opportunity of observing us unawares. As a race we have our special limitations and imperfections, and for a foreigner it does not require a high degree of keen-sightedness to detect them. We know for certain that these defects did not escape Nivedita's observation, but she did not stop there to generalise, as most other foreigners.....But Sister Nivedita, being an idealist, saw a great deal more than is usually seen by those foreigners who can only see things but not truths.” I have drawn attention to this passage to show by weightier words than mine what equipment persons of Miss Noble's type have got to interpret India and what equipment persons of Miss Mayo's type have not got to interpret India.

But the question of support or attack in respect of India's ideals by outsiders is not a very important fact at all. Let us dispassionately consider whether Indian ideals can or cannot stand the test of modernity and whether they have any inherent value in the modern age. The history of India has been really one of a great people who have always had a strong and unreleasable hold on the verities of life and who have always had the privilege and the mission of giving a lead to universal thought. India is as surely the heart of Asia as Greece was the heart of the West. Nay, her influence has spread in all directions. Through Pythagoras and Plotinus she influenced the thought of the West. Through Buddha she influenced the thought of the East. The influence of Sri Sankara on the thought of the world has been of a unique character. Each outer limitation of India in the political field seems to have brought forth only a finer manifestation of the sweetness of her nature so that we may well apply to India the beautiful sentence which occurs in Kalidasa's *Malavikagnimitra* *Vimardasurabhih Khalu Vakulavaliha*. (The fragrance of the Vakula flowers increases with each treading down.)

If such has been the contribution of India to the thought of the world in the past, the contribution is all the greater to-day and the world is more in need of it than ever before. After the great war of 1914 Europe has begun to realise—though by fits and starts as yet—the rampant evil of the religion of power which she worshipped before.

Signor Nitti says in his great and striking work on *The Decadence of Europe*: "Meanwhile the whole of Europe is in a state of decadence. It has ceased to be the continent which once controlled the production and the trade of the world. It has seen the decline of its vast expansion and the pride of its intellectual life.....As each day passes, Europe sinks rapidly into decay. There is economic decadence, there is intellectual decadence, there is moral decadence..... No one foresaw during the war that the military paradox which we are now witnessing would have been realised—that Europe after the war, when the vanquished have been disarmed, would have more men under arms than before the war. The more acts of injustice increase, the more ill-feeling increases, and the more ill-feeling increases the greater becomes the trepidation of the victor who wants bigger armies. All the peoples outside Europe look on at this progressive decay of ours with mixed feelings of stupor and agitation."

Thus post war reconstruction became inevitable if civilisation was not to be swept off from the face of the earth altogether. The League of Nations is the reply of the present in the political field to the challenge of the power-worshipping past. The co-operative basis of economic life is the reply of the present in the economic field to the challenge of the mammon-worshipping past. Art for God's sake is the reply of the present in the aesthetic field to the challenge of the beauty-worshipping past. A new yearning for a mystical vision of God is the reply of the present in the spiritual field to the challenge of the earth-worshipping past.

It is because Indian ideals in the realms of politics and economics and art and religion are so modern albeit so old that they have such a powerful appeal to-day. This is not the proper occasion to go into a detailed exposition of Hindu cultural ideals. I have tried to do so to some extent in my work on *Hindu Culture*. Speaking briefly, the Hindu genius has always stood for social interdependence, economic co-operation, spirituality in art, and mystical vision of God. The Hindu outlook is a safe, balanced, synthetic view on life. The Hindu race has always seen life steadily and seen it whole. It is as one of the most perfect incarnations of the Indian genius that we must learn to appraise and evaluate the life-work of Sri Ramakrishna if we are to realise its real glory and its true significance.

Let me turn for a brief while to the life of the saint before I refer to his life-work and its value as an embodiment of the Hindu genius. He was born on 17th February 1836 at Kamarpukur as a son of Kshudi-

ram Chatterji and Chandra Devi and was named Gadadhar. He was a most gentle and lovable child who won the hearts of all. During his boyhood his mind was steeped in the folklore of Bengal and in the immortal epics of the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. The *Sadhus* loved him and were loved by him. On one occasion when he went along with certain pilgrims he lost his ordinary consciousness and fell into a trance. He described the realisation by saying that when he chanted the name of the Divine Mother and concentrated his mind on Her form, he lost his outer consciousness and felt an indescribable and ineffable bliss in his inner consciousness. The modern world—nay, even modern India—does not know and does not seem even to care to know that Yogic Samadhi is not catalepsy or self-mesmerism or auto-hypnotism but the dissolution or rather the sublimation of our petty normal individuality in enveloping and engulfing waves of spiritual bliss. He was afterwards invested with the sacred thread. He was then permitted to conduct the worship of the family god Raghuvira. He passed many hours every day in worship and intense meditation. One day when he was asked to take up the character of God Shiva in a sacred drama which was staged on a Sivaratri night, he appeared on the stage as the Lord Shiva and immediately lost his ordinary consciousness. He stood on the stage with a radiant face and with tears of joy flowing from his eyes. He could not be brought back to his ordinary consciousness till the morning and the performance had stop. On another occasion he dressed himself as a woman to realise the *Madhurya Bhava* (the feeling of intensely sweet spiritual love) which filled the heart of Radha for Sri Krishna. He never found much to attract him in the ordinary dry-as dust education which is imparted in the modern school, and he attended it for sometime merely as a matter of form. He felt that the true mission of his life was the realisation of God and the communication to others of the power of realising God. He turned away from bread-winning secular education to God-winning spiritual education.

We now come to the next outstanding event which profoundly influenced his life. Rani Rasmani was a wealthy Hindu widow. She was devoted to the goddess Kali and built a temple for the goddess at Dakshineswar near Calcutta. She requested Gadadhar's eldest brother Ramkumar to officiate as the priest in the temple. He agreed and took up that office. Gadadhar took up later on the office of decorating the image. From this time began his intensive spiritual *sadhana*. He poured out his heart in sweet song; he feasted his eyes by decorating the deity; and he meditated on the goddess day and night. The quiet spot where he used to meditate in a grove of five

trees is known as *Panchavati*. His life was then one of continuous meditation and devotion.

Gadadhar—let me rather use the more famous name—Sri Ramakrishna—threw himself heart and soul into the worship of the Divine Mother. Sister Nivedita says:—"Driven by his own nature, impelled from within by that irresistible necessity that called him into being without any rest or relaxation for twelve long years at least he persisted in that inner warfare. Then, at last, the goal was attained. The Mother revealed Herself. From that moment his personality was that of a little child satisfied that he was in Her arms." He was overwhelmed by the ecstasy of the vision of the Goddess. He felt that the image was vibrant with Her spiritual glory. His mind had moved away from the formality of *Vaidhi Bhakti* (ordinary formal devotion) into the joy of *Prema Bhakti* (intense and ecstatic devotion) and was in a state of continuous ecstasy.

His God-intoxication appeared to his nearest relations and others as insanity. To worldlings other-worldiness always appears to be madness and nothing more! Many remedies were tried but in vain. Finally his mother resolved to get him married. He was eventually married to Saradmoni Devi. He himself said on a later occasion about the meaning of marriage: "Do you know why one should marry? A Brahman has to undergo ten kinds of *Samskaras* and marriage is one of them. One can really become an Acharya when he has passed through all the *Samskaras*." The Indian ideal of marriage is the ideal beautifully described in the *Bhagavata* where woman is described as man's ally in the war of sense and soul. The highest sublimation of the Hindu marital ideal is found in Sri Ramakrishna's marital life. He was her *Ishta Devata* (beloved deity) as his *Ishtam* was the Divine Mother. He regarded his wife as a manifestation of the Divine Mother and he trained and disciplined her in the paths of God-ward love. The life of the Holy mother is one of the first things that Modern India has had the good fortune to have and to show to the world.

Sri Ramakrishna then perfected his *sadhana* by the help and guidance received by him from a Bhairavi Brahmani and by a great saint named Totapuri and by many other devotees and learned men. All the varieties of Vaishnava and Sakta *sadhanas*, all the forms of Bhava (spiritual feeling) from *dasya* (service) to *Madhurya* (sweetness), all the methods and practices and ideals of all the great religions—were summoned up and perfected and transcended in Sri Ramakrishna. More than any other *sadhanas*, the *sadhanas* of *Vatsalya* and *Madhurya* even more than the *sadhanas* of *Santa* and *Dasya* and *Sakhya* appealed to him

and won his heart. The love of the milkmaids of Brindavana for Sri Krishna has always been regarded in India as the acme of the human realisation of God. The sage Narada himself instances them in his *Bhakti Sutras* as the greatest among the lovers of God. Sri Ramakrishna used to say that they forgot their body in a tumult of bliss when they saw Sri Krishna's holy and blessed form or heard the soul entrancing melodies of his flute which, according to the Upanishads, was the form taken by God Shiva to be as near God Vishnu as possible. The most vital elements in this *Mahabhava* (supreme spiritual love) of Radha for Sri Krishna are the element of self-forgetfulness in seeking the joy of the Beloved (*Tatsukhasukhitvam*) and the element of intense pain at even the thought of a momentary separation from the Beloved (*Videshabhacerutvam*). Just as Sri Andal personated the *gopis* in her heart to realise their supreme adorations of love and just as Chaitanya impersonated Radha in the drama of Krishna Leela to realise the highest form of devotion to God, even so Sri Ramakrishna went about for some time in women's garments and spoke and felt as a woman to conquer his heart and make it full of a love which passeth all understanding. He used to be often with the ladies of the family of Rani Rasmoni's son-in-law Mathur Babu who was one of the greatest of his devotees. It was his privilege to taste the supreme bliss of God-love and at the same time to enjoy the supreme bliss of *Brahma Sakshatkara* (identity with the Blissful Absolute). It was Totapuri that gave him *Sanyasa* and initiated him in the path of *Nirvikalpa Samadhi* (undifferentiated and ecstatic trance). Sri Ramakrishna passed at a bound into the highest plane of *Brahmi-stithi* and *Brahmibhava* and attained the highest culmination of spiritual realisation.

Some years later his nephew, his brother and his mother died. But nothing in life or in death ever made him swerve an inch from his self-chosen and God-ordained path. It was in March 1875 that there happened an event which was destined to have far-reaching consequences on two great personages and their great motherland. Sri Ramakrishna heard about Keshab Chunder Sen's greatness and with his usual simplicity went to meet him. Keshab Chunder Sen was one of the most pious of men. But his mind was not steeped in the mystical lore of India or in the Indian *sadhans* of God-love and God-realisation. His contact with Sri Ramakrishna intensified him in his desire for the vision and realisation of God. He realised and proclaimed his famous *Navavidhana* (New Dispensation) for which he received his inspiration from Sri Ramakrishna. The beautiful idea of the Motherhood of God now became a portion of the New-

Brahmoism. Love of God became a more intimate feeling than a mere sense of dependence and awe. God was realised both as formless and as having form and as nameless and as having names. Brahmoism became more tolerant of image-worship. Pratap Chandra Mazumdar, who was a great Brahmo leader, wrote in the Theistic Quarterly Review in October, 1897: "My mind is still floating in the luminous atmosphere which that wonderful man diffuses around him whenever and wherever he goes. My mind is not yet disenchanted of the mysterious and indefinable pathos which he pours into it whenever he meets me. What is there in common between him and me? I, a Europeanised, civilised, self-centred, semi-sceptical, so-called educated reasoner, and he, a poor, illiterate, unpolished, half-idolatrous, friendless Hindu devotee? His face retains a fullness, a child-like tenderness, a profound visible humbleness, an unspeakable sweetness of expression and a smile that I have seen on no other face that I can remember..... His religion means ecstasy, his worship means transcendental insight, his whole nature burns night and day with the permanent fire and fever of a strange faith and feeling. His conversation is a ceaseless breaking forth of this inward fire and lasts long hours..... He never writes anything, seldom argues, he never attempts to instruct, he is continuously pouring out his soul in a rhapsody of spiritual utterances, he sings wonderfully, and makes observations of singular wisdom..... He has no other thought, no other occupation, no other relation, no other friend in his humble life than his God. That God is more than sufficient for him. His spotless holiness, his deep unspeakable blessedness, his unstudied, endless wisdom, his childlike peacefulness and affection towards all men, his consuming all-absorbing love for God are his only reward. And may he long continue to enjoy that reward! *Our own ideal of religious life is different*, but so long as he is spared to us, gladly shall we sit at his feet to learn from him the sublime precepts of purity, unworldliness, spirituality, and inebriation in the love of God." I have quoted this long passage not only to show the differences between the approach to God from without and the approach of God from within and to show Sri Ramakrishna's great qualities as a man but also to show how the finest incarnation of the Indian genius fascinated and even overwhelmed even the leading spirits of educated India.

Thus Sri Ramakrishna's band of admirers and devotees and disciples grew from day to day. He himself has said well: "When the rose is blown and sheds its fragrance all around the bees come of themselves. The bees seek the full-blown rose, and not the rose the

bees." Among disciples the greatest was certainly Narenda Nath Dutt better known as Swami Vivekananda. Narendra was born in 1863. He was a brilliant and gifted and versatile youth. He had a natural bias for mediation but his godless modern education made him an agnostic to some extent. But yet his inner urge towards God was imperative. He went to Maharshi Devendra Nath Tagore and asked him, "Sir have you seen God?" The reply which he got was unsatisfying. He met Sri Ramakrishna in November, 1880 for the first time. Sri Ramakrishna says about that first meeting: "Narendra entered this room by the western door. He seemed careless about his body and dress, and unlike other people, unmindful of the external world. His eyes bespoke an introspective mind, as if some part of it was always concentrated upon something within." Narenda himself says about it: "To my utter surprise, he began to shed profuse tears of joy as he held me by the hand, and addressing most tenderly as one long familiar to him, said, 'Ah, you come so late! How could you be so unkind as to keep me waiting so long?' " Narendra asked him: "Have you seen God?" Sri Ramakrishna replied: "Yes I see God as I see you, only more intensely." From that time forwards Narendra met Sri Ramakrishna often and became an adept in spiritual *sādhana*s and realisations. It has been well said:—"At that first meeting, when Naren met Sri Ramakrishna more than two personalities were concerned. The complex life of India itself began to flow, as it were in two definite streams of tendency—the old and the new.....And when Sri Ramakrishna met Naren, these two, the old and the new, found their confluence, and were therefore to flow into an historic stream as it were the Mighty Ganges of the Indian future."

Thus went on the ministry of Guru Maharaj to humanity in general and the people of India in particular. Crowds went to him day after day. Max Muller says: "Numbers of earnest men, of all sects and creeds began to flock to him to receive instruction and to drink the waters of life. From day-dawn to nightfall he had no leisure to eat or drink, so engaged was he in teaching, exhorting, and ministering to the wants of these hungry and thirsty millions." His incessant talk led to the trouble of the clergyman's throat which developed into cancer. The illness became aggravated, and in spite of the best treatment he went into Mahasamadhi on 16th August, 1886.

(To be Continued.)

THE RELIGION OF VEDANTA.

By Sridhar Majumdar, M. A.

The whole world is now seething with sectarian wranglings and religious disputes. These conflicts will surely vanish if we only turn to the Upanishads, the most ancient scriptures of the world. If we cast our eyes downwards from the mountain peak, inequalities of the planes will at once disappear. The system of Religion, preached in the Upanishads known as Vedanta, is a very catholic one ; it has no quarrel with any religion whatsoever ; it rather embraces in its fold all the religions of the world, and its echo still vibrates from the lips of Sri Krishna in the *Srimad-Bhagavad-Gita*. Chapter IV. Verse 11, where He says: "It is my path, O son of Pritha, that men tread everywhere."

Vedanta preaches that the whole universe, with all its animate and inanimate contents, emanates from, lives and moves in, and ultimately dissolves in Brahman, the Universal Soul (Chhandogya Upanishad, Chap. III, 14,1 ; Taithtiriya Upanishad, Bhriguballi, I, 1) ; that though the universe is a transformation of the energy of Brahman, Brahman is not exhausted in the universe, the whole creation covers only a fraction of It ; but by far the largest portion remains unmanifested, which is Its transcendent aspect (Chhandogya, Chap. III. 12,6) ; that emancipation lies in having a thorough knowledge, and realization of the true nature of Brahman, attainable by Love ;—"By Love he knows me intimately and thoroughly, who am I and what am I" (*Srimad-Bhagavad-Gita*, Chap. XVIII,55).

A question may now arise as to what is the real nature of Brahman. It is extremely difficult for the finite individual soul to get at once a clear conception of the Infinite Universal Soul ; and more so to express it in adequate language. Different commentators of the Brahma Sutra give apparently different versions of the nature of Brahman ; but they all base their conclusions on the authority of Sruti which is the outcome of direct intuition of the Seers of old, called Rishis. To doubt any of these versions is to doubt Sruti itself, which is regarded as sacrilege by the wise. We must reverentially bow to them all and maintain that all these different Sruties about the nature of Brahman are perfectly true as they are all equally weighty. The illustrious Sankara, in his theory of absolute monism (Advaita, pure and simple), has taken Brahman in Its transcendent aspect, which is unquestionably true if we leave out of

account the universe which is only an insignificant factor in comparison with the unmanifested portion of Brahman; the devotional Ramanuja, in his theory of differentiated monism (Bisistadwaita), has treated Brahman in Its immanent aspect, which is also very true in respect of the phenomenal world with which we are primarily concerned; the strongly pious Madhva, in his theory of dualism (Dwaita), has taken Brahman in the light of the Creator and all the manifested things as created beings, which is also relatively true. As all these views are true in respect of the particular aspect of Brahman dealt with by them, each in his own way, the real nature of Brahman is an adjustment of all these views, as taken by Acharya Nimbarka without entering into any quarrel with any other commentator, in his theory of monism standing side by side with dualism (Dwaitadwaita).

Having Infinite Brahman as the ultimate goal, none can cherish any perverse idea against any religion whatsoever; as every religion of the world preaches the worship of Brahman either personal or absolute, differing only in nomenclature but remaining everywhere the same in substance.

It is not possible for every individual to realise at once the Infinite Universal Soul; Vedanta, therefore, prescribes stages, beginning from dualism, to be pursued step by step and ending in all-embracing monism. Even in dualism Vedanta does not oppose when processes for the cultivation of devotion are different like the worship of God in the light of the father, the mother, or the most intimate friend to suit one's own nature and capacity; as in every process, Vedanta declares, the ultimate aim is the realisation of Brahman. Every religion of the world may find support in one or the other of the passages of Vedanta which is at the same time so cosmopolitan in principle that even the worst criminal, it holds, will not be lost for ever, but will some day find repose in the all-absorbing Brahman after purification by several births, proving thereby, the gospel truth that "I and my Father are one".

In the religion of Vedanta "place is found", to speak in the language of the Rev. J. Tyssul Davis (Minister of the Theistic Church, London), "for the Transcendent Deity of Hebruism, and the Immanent Deity of Pantheistic Hellenism, and reconciliation of the Unknowable of Herbert Spencer with the personal God of the Christians."

It is indeed very strange that in a matter like spiritual culture where people should stand linked hand in hand, there should be so

much bickering and bad blood disturbing the peace of the world, sometimes to such an extent as to culminate in blood shed. But now an opportune moment appears to have come, as great men of the world are trying to put together their mighty intellects to find out the way to the world's lasting peace, of which the most powerful opponent is people's aversion to people; and this aversion can only be subdued by love as was found in the life of every prophet of the world.

People's innate tendency is to love others, which remains inoperative under the influence of several external and internal adverse circumstances; these adverse circumstances may be surmounted if one only remains true to one's own altruistic instincts, as fundamental principle in each and every religion is to love and to live for others. Aversion towards any religion in this world may be overcome if one only feels that he is but a link in the chain, and that every religion is a component part of the universal religion of Vedanta. One breathing the bliss of the unlimited Brahman will refuse to be confined within the limited horizon of a communal spirit.

An echo of vedantism is heard also in the Sufism of the Mahomedans. In reality there is no material antagonism between religions of the different communities except in the twisted brain of interested persons or impostors. It only behoves us to preach to the world and to make every individual feel that there is no conflict in the ultimate end and aim of life, that the aim of every religion is to realise the Supreme Spirit and that minor differences in the intermediate processes are negligible factors, tolerable and even permissible in view of the common goal.

The Reverend Sri Ramakrishna has shown by his personal example that there is no real conflict in religious ideals. At different periods of his life he followed, in his divine meditation, different paths prescribed in the different creeds of differently named religions without any bias or aversion to any faith of the world; he was convinced in the very core of his heart that every religion leads to the same goal, namely the realisation of the Supreme Being. So at the end, during the latter part of his life, he remained mostly absorbed in the Supreme Soul without recourse to any dogma or creed of any nomenclature; and this we call the Religion of Vedanta.

With this lamp of Vedanta as our guide, I am sure, there will be no more quarrel with any member of any professed religion on

earth. If we can only strain our soul to such a lofty pitch, all the differences on the way will disappear; aversion will give place to affection, enmity to amity and selfishness to selflessness. With an Universal Fatherhood an universal brotherhood will be restored turning this earth into heaven purged from all dissensions and differences.

THE INDIAN WOMAN AND THE INDIAN HOME *

By Sister Devamata.

On the morning of my last day in Madras a gentleman sent his eldest son to bring me to their home for a parting visit. The son came for me in a pretentious carriage with two liveried servants on the box and two standing behind. We drove along a broad shaded road edged by handsome residences, through a high gate and beautiful garden, round an imposing house with upreaching pillars, to a curving verandah-terrace in the rear. There amid other seats and swinging hammocks stood a narrow wooden bench with one end raised like a pillow. Laughingly I said to the boy with me, pointing to the bench:—"I suppose you sleep there." The quick reply came: "No, but my grandmother does."

That hard narrow wooden bench struck the key-note of the South Indian home, I might say of the home everywhere in India. Austere simplicity is the prevailing rule. The climate demands it and all the ideals call for it. It is not that the Indians cannot have beds or are not civilised enough to use them.

The Indo-Aryan also prefers to sit on the floor. It permits a more stable, natural posture and one that prepares better for the practice of meditation and concentration. The Occidental expends an enormous amount of subconscious energy holding himself on a raised seat against the pull of gravitation. We realize it when we try to indraw our forces. I do not suggest that the people of the West discard chairs; but for a nation as inward and contemplative in habit as the Indian, sitting cross-legged on the ground or floor is beyond a doubt the best posture. It is the one peculiarly fitted to

* This forms an abridged chapter of Sister Devamata's *Days in an Indian Monastery*, a book recently published by the Ananda Ashrama, La Crescenta California, U. S. A. The Sister is a citizen of America. She lived in India with the Indians for sometime, and had the privilege of studying Indian life closely. Her observations on the Indians and specially on the women of India will be, we hope, of much interest and benefit to our readers.—Ed. V. K.

the life. They have chairs and use them on occasions, but chiefly in receiving visitors. The inner apartments show a great barrenness of furniture.

The Indian shrinks from the tyranny of things. He has not the Western mania for collecting and storing. Each set of garments is washed every day, dried and worn on the morrow. The same is true of men and women. The whole scheme of dress is of the simplest.

Fashions have not been altered materially since the days of the Upanishads thousands of years ago. The *Sari* and *Dhoti*, that is the strips of silk or cotton that are wound and draped about the body, are always the same, with slight variation in border and color; they are put on in the same way and are worn until they are worn out. The "cloth," as both are familiarly called in South India, does not have to be "made over" from season to season to meet the requirements of shifting styles.

The manner of dress labels a man or woman. In South India no Brahmin lady ever wears anything on her feet, unless it be silver anklets. Gold is never worn on the foot. Bare feet are a sign of distinction. The soles of a working-woman's feet wear out, just as the sole of a shoe wears through, and she has to resort to sandals; otherwise walking would be painful. In Bengal they always wore slippers and now they have added stockings. Western influence is more apparent there and wherever the Occident comes, material things multiply.

A South Indian lady also never carries an umbrella, but she goes out rarely in the rain or hot sun. Old and young dress alike, except very little children. Pins, hairpins, shoes and stockings, hats, gloves and trinkets form no part of her toilet and this means the elimination of many personal needs. Her hair is parted, combed in glossy straightness to the ears and coiled in thick braids at the neck, with a bar of jewels at the centre of the coil and often another jewelled ornament on the crown of the head; yet ornaments and braids are held by the hair itself. No comb or hairpin is used and the hair remains smooth and in place even after a night's rest.

In India no effort is made to mask bodily defects or to accentuate bodily advantages. People are frankly what they are. Unveiled frankness indeed appears to characterize all Indians. As there are no closets, so there are no skeletons. People talk openly of their family affairs, honorable or otherwise. The Indian manifests always a striking detachment from his external life. He rarely identifies

himself with it. He is subjective rather than objective. He is soul and possesses body as a transient tenement. Clothes, houses, furniture and material belongings are momentary and hence secondary.

Among Indian women beauty is usual and it is all the more lovely because it is accompanied by an utter lack of self-consciousness. I used to watch in wonder the loveliness and grace of the women and their complete unawareness of it. This is probably due in part at least to the fact that mirrors do not stand at every turn to remind them of their appearance. A mirror is a rare article of furniture in India. I never saw one in a house there; I am told that a few have them, but not in evidence. Each lady has a toilet box in the cover of which is a small glass. The box contains comb, brush and other articles necessary to the toilet, among them the Kumkum powder with which she makes the red mark between the eye-brows if she is married, or the black paste with which the young girl puts a similar mark on the forehead if she is still unmarried.

When the hair is dried after the morning bath, and no bath is considered a bath unless water is poured over the head, the toilet box is taken out and opened, the hair is arranged and the clean *Sari* and Jacket put on. The toilet finished, the box is set away and the lady does not look at herself for twenty-four hours. The mirror bought for me measured about nine inches by twelve and Rudra apologized for getting so large a one. It was hung in a far corner of my bed room. One morning the sweeper woman happened to catch her reflection in it. She stood transfixed. It was the first time she had ever seen herself in a mirror. She was too poor to possess a toilet box. After that she would give a few strokes with her broom, then run to have another look; then again sweep, then look. Her face was a revelation to her. She did not know that I was on the verandah outside watching her.

Indo-Aryan tradition gives great freedom to women. The Purdah system has no place in it. That sprang up in India as a reflex of Mohammedan domination, which preceded British rule. The Mohammedan did not understand feminine liberty and wherever he prevailed it became necessary to veil the women and withdraw them from public gaze. In Bengal, where Mohammedan influence was strong, even to day ladies do not go into the street except in palanquin or carriage. In Madras where the Mohammedan influence has always been negligible, ladies go about freely, even at nightfall, sometimes followed by a servant, more often alone and with face and head uncovered.

There are none the less, certain conservative restrictions about their coming and going. A gentleman must not greet a lady in the street or even look towards her, much less stop to talk with her; it matters not how close a friend of the family he may be. Young married girls who have not yet gone to live in their husband's house are exempt from this restriction. I recall one evening when I was walking with a householder friend of the monastery; we passed a house where he was very intimately connected and he called a kindly greeting to a young girl standing on the steps. She made no response and he said to me quickly: "I forgot, she has joined her husband; I should not have spoken to her."

The mother is the ruling spirit of the house. She holds the key to the strong box and dispenses the money and family treasure. She directs the course of life of the various members of the household and she has sometimes twenty five or thirty to look after. She regards it as her special privilege to serve them all before she thinks of herself. By choice she sees that every one is fed before she will eat. She does this to be sure that should an unexpected guest or a beggar come to the door, there will be food for them. It is told of Sri Ramakrishna's mother that when they were so poor that they had only one meal a day, often she gave that to a chance visitor or mendicant and joyfully went the twenty-four hours without food.

Unselfishness is a living, everpresent quality in the Indian woman's heart; a natural, spontaneous attribute of her character. She does not come last because she is put last, but because she covets the place. Many of the usages that are misunderstood by the Occidental world are based on a desire to honour, protect or cherish woman—not to subordinate or dishonor her. Take the custom of the wife walking behind the husband; it arose in the days when to go abroad meant facing many dangers and the first place was a place of peril, the second was a place of protection. With that idea behind it, it has come down the ages.

When a custom is imbedded in the Indo-Aryan social structure, it is extremely difficult to uproot it, for the Indo-Aryans are tenacious of tradition. I do not discuss the problem of the widow, as her position is in a state of transition; old conditions are breaking down and I feel confident that a new order will be established for her in the social re-adjustment now in progress. She will become, I believe, the teacher and helper and reformer of modern Indian society.

Indian women possess unusual executive ability. Indo-Aryan annals contain the record of able rulers and administrators among

them. One salient instance is known to me. It is that of Rani Rashmani, who lived in the last century and built the Temple on the Ganges where Sri Ramakrishna spent the larger part of his life. She sprang from a humble station and had little schooling, but she managed a large property with great efficiency and even had the courage to oppose the Government in a controversy over some land. She not only defended her rights with fearless determination, but she carried the dispute to the court, pleaded her own case and won it.

There have been notable spiritual teachers also among the women of India. They are declared to be the authors even of some of the Vedic Scriptures. Sri Ramakrishna's first teacher after his initiation was a woman. I was told by one who was very close to him that she remained with him for eleven years, then went away one day suddenly. She could recite by heart in Sanskrit one hundred thousand lines of Aryan sacred Writings and was possessed of astounding Scriptural learning. She seemed to have acquaintance with all the religious literature of the Aryans and could tell just where even unfamiliar injunctions were to be found.

I knew a simple-hearted mother in Madras to whom the gift of verse came while I was in India. She had always busied herself quietly about her household duties and was an unassuming gentle person without any claim to scholarship, but she was naturally devout and her "fancy work" consisted in decorating holy pictures. One day when she was working on one, a hymn to the Supreme Lord burst from her lips. This was followed by another and still another. They continued to come as long as I was in Madras. As they poured forth she wrote them down. They were in Tamil so I could not judge of their merit, but I was told by an authority in literary matters, that they were remarkable for purity of form and chaste, rhythmic beauty of language.

There have been various gifted poets among the women of modern India, but the Indian woman is primarily a mother and guardian of the sanctity of the home. The home in India is sacred and inviolable. I had daily evidence of this.

House-keeping is much easier in India than in the Occident. With fewer household appointments, less accumulation, less furniture and a simpler form of dress, there is less to care for. There is also less to provide in the way of implements. Tools of trade are manufactured on the spot and from material at hand. The ingenuity of the Indian workman in this regard far outclasses the inventive power of the Occidental, who first makes a machine to make the tool, then

manufactures his tool. This machine requires several other machines to make its parts, so he is caught in a mechanical labyrinth.

The Indian laborer keeps wisely to simpler ways. If he needs a scrubbing brush, he creates one out of the coarse brown fire of the ripe cocoanut. When he has finished with it he throws it away and there is no soggy brush propped up to try in untoward places. Does he want a feather duster? He slits a palm leaf into fringe, winds it round a bamboo pole, long or short as the need may be. For broom his arm serves as handle and between thumb and first finger he flattens a bunch of broom straws from the jungle, a dozen bunches of which he can buy for a few cents from a peddler at the door. His dustpan is made of platted dried palm leaf stretched on a split bamboo frame and great is the skill of the sweeper in jumping the dust over the thick edge.

If the working man or woman requires a disinfectant, he mixes a little cow dung with water and has a perfect one. Anglo-Indian doctors declare there is no better. If he is too poor to buy fuel, he rolls more cow dung in the dust of the road to make it pleasanter to handle, mixes it with rice straw and water, shapes it into flat cakes, bakes it in the sun and he has an effective peat.

I could cite countless instances of the Indian laborer's ready powers of adaptability and his skill in simplifying, instead of complicating daily living; but these few examples suffice. His method also makes for better sanitation, since no article employed in cleaning is used a second time. Even his way of caring for his teeth is more sanitary. He takes a fresh twig from special trees, softens the end of it and carefully rubs each tooth, after which he rinses his mouth and throws away the stick.

He also washes mouth and hands thoroughly after eating. There are none of the careless habits of quick lunch counter about his way of doing. Once in Madras a conductor requested all the passengers not to take his car but to get into the open car in front, because he had eaten his luncheon, there was no water near to wash his hands and he could not think of giving change with unwashed hands. He explained that at the junction a mile away there was water, then we could move into the cooler car.

Among the poor the family goes with the mother. The children follow her to work and wait near by while she performs her task. I used to see a sturdy young woman helping on the construction of a new road at Madras. As she moved back and forth, four little ones sat by the roadside watching or playing together and a fifth

hung from an over-spreading branch in a hammock, made of a piece of cotton cloth. When the lunch hour came she gathered her happy brood about her, fed them, suckled the baby, hung it up again in its improvised hammock and went back to her work. Although she carried a small basket of broken rock on her head, she seemed to me better off than many sales-women in Western shops, shut away from light and air and children in bargain basements.

Although house-keeping is simpler in India, the Indian housewife has not fewer duties. She takes many upon herself out of devotion and a feeling of consecration. In homes where there are ample resources and servants the mother still prepares the daily meals by preference. She realizes the physical and spiritual value of food cooked with love and a sense of sanctity and does not wish to deprive her family of this advantage. Indian women have a remarkable gift for cooking and cooking is for them almost a religion. As the food prepared is nearly always offered in the Shrine before it is eaten, its preparation becomes an actual part of the daily worship. In homes where a cook is employed, the ladies of the house frequently keep as their task the paring and cutting of the vegetables for the curry.

The care of the household Sanctuary also is claimed as the mother's privilege. She cleans it, polishes the vessels used in the worship and often conducts the Service. Sometimes the younger members of the family help her. The order of the day in a Madras home is this. Every one is up by six or before. While the women are busy with their house or with the children, the gentlemen see clients, transact business, visit the sick or teach the little ones. Next comes the bath, which is taken by rubbing the body first with soap or a cleansing earth, then pouring water over head and body until earth or soap is rinsed off. The Indian says if you get into a tub of water dirty, the water is no longer clean; how can you get clean by washing in it?

After the bath comes meditation or worship or a pilgrimage to the Temple. Then follows the main meal of the day and when this is over the men of the family go to their office or business. At one or two o'clock many take *Tiffin*, a light luncheon usually brought from the home by servants. The restaurant habit is alien to Indian traditions of purity and cleanliness. When the office closes at five, the men on their way home go to a *Math* (monastery) or a holy man for an hour of spiritual refreshment and ladies go to the Temple. Evening worship and a late meal close the routine of the day.

The South Indian home is the centre of multifarious activities. Is a harness needed? The gentleman of the house buys leather and the necessary hardware, a saddler is called from his village and in some quiet corner on the premises builds a new harness. Or a weaver comes from the village and on the verandah of the house takes the order for *Saris* and *Dhotis* enough to provide every member of the family with wearing apparel for a whole year. A tailor sits with his sewing machine at one end of the verandah making an official pongee or cloth coat for the head of the house, and at the other end may be a jeweller cross-legged on the floor before a minute anvil.

The Indians are very wary of banks, they have lost so much money through them. They feel safer to convert money into jewelry and make their women their safe deposit boxes. The family next to me inherited some money and for several months a jeweller sat on their front verandah and the ring of the little steel hammer on the anvil sounded through the air from sun rise to sunset. Each morning the gold was weighed and the gems counted when given out; each evening gold and gems were weighed or counted again, then locked up in the strong box for the night.

There may be little regularity or system in the Indian household, but the rough places which ordinarily come from this lack are made smooth by sweetness and loving-kindness. Gentleness and a quiet withdrawal of self, characterize the Indian home and spontaneous self-sacrifice stands as its foundation. It is these glorifying qualities which make possible the community spirit which holds together under one roof father, sons and grandsons, with their wives and children. This patriarchal system has weakened in new India but the tradition which sustains it is not dead and will not die so long as Indian women continue to possess the noble selfless nature that has always been theirs.

STORY OF SRI SANKARACHARYA'S LIFE

(MANHOOD)

(Continued from page 432)

By Swami Atulananda

Remembering the last words of Kumarilla, Sankara directed his steps towards the Ashrama of Mandan Misra, Kumarilla's foremost disciple, who after his Guru's departure was recognised as the greatest exponent of the Karma Kanda in all India.

Mandan Misra strictly observed the elaborate sites and ceremonies prescribed in the scriptures. Day and night volumes of smoke rose from the sacrificial fires. Great discussions took place there, and the Ashrama resounded with the sonorous chanting of Vedic texts from numerous disciples, all trained and instructed by the Guru himself.

Mandan Misra himself a Sanskrit scholar, imposed the study of the sacred language as the first duty of his followers. In the Ashrama no other language was ever spoken, not even by those who performed menial services. One chronicler goes so far as to tell us that even the parrots on the place were taught to repeat texts from the Vedas. Be that as it may, learning was held in the highest esteem.

To be allowed to visit the Ashrama even, one first had to satisfy a Pandit at the gate, for no one without erudition was permitted to enter the grounds.

It must have taken a great deal of courage on the part of Sankara—then hardly more than a youth—to meet the great Acharya in his own surroundings, and there to challenge him for debate. We must not forget that the outcome of the debate would either make or break the young Sannyasin, for according to Sankara's own stipulation the losing party had to ally himself with the victor.

It was only Sankara's established reputation as an exceptionally able opponent that made it possible for him to approach Mandan Misra on such terms. Both parties were confident of their own power. At the same time they realized the other's strength. They were well matched, and no one could foresee the outcome of the contest.

When Sankara arrived, Mandan Misra received him with due respect. Though himself older in years, he treated Sankara as his equal. Comfortable quarters were shown him, where he was made welcome to stay as long as it would please him. Then, with mutual understanding the day for debate was set. Both sides agreed that it was necessary to appoint an umpire to give decisions, and finally to announce the victor.

Mandan Misra was a householder. He had married a young woman as vastly learned as he himself was. Her name, Ubhoy Bharati, was known all over the land. She was the only person qualified to fill this important position. It was therefore decided to approach her on the subject.

Now the learned lady was placed in a perplexing position. Partiality on her part was out of the question. But for a wife to decide

against her husband would have been condemned as most unbecoming; neither was it befitting a woman to decide against a great Sannyasin. Such was the opinion of those days. She, therefore, declined the honour,

When, however, she was pressed to accept, as no one else could take her place, she got out of the difficulty by taking refuge in divine power. "Let the gods decide," she suggested.

When the day came the two Gurus, attended by their disciples, met for the contest. A shady space in the open was duly consecrated by sprinkling of Ganges water and uttering of prescribed Mantrams. Seats were prepared for the contestants, made of sacred Kusha grass covered with tiger skin, scriptures were recited. Then the two Acharyas took their seats facing each other, their disciples arrayed behind their masters. A Brahmin priest offered worships to the two scholars, waving before them lights and incense.

When everything was ready the lady umpire appeared. In her hand she brought two flower garlands, fresh and fragrant. Placing a garland around the neck of each of the two opponents, she spoke, "May the disputants strictly adhere to the rules of debate. May the Devas be propitious. May Truth prevail. I call upon the God of Justice to decide in this serious matter. The garland of the victor will remain fresh and fragrant while the garland of the conquered will wilt and wither. These shall be the signs of victory and defeat and there shall be no other decision."

Sankara being the challenging party, it was Mandan Misra's privilege to open the discussion. After a short outline of the creed he defended, Mandan Misra stated his conclusions in short, concise aphorisms. Sankara countered with equally terse maxims, expressing his own belief.

Mandan.—He who worships the Devas goes to the Devas.

Sankara.—He who worships the Atman goes to the Atman.

Mandan.—The Devas are the highest, they are the source of all blessings.

Sankara.—The Atman surpasses the Devas, It is beyond time and space.

Mandan.—In the sphere of the Devas man enjoys supreme happiness.

Sankara.—A million times greater is the happiness of him who knows the Atman.

Mandan.—The performance of Yajna (sacrifices) leads to Mukti (liberation).

Sankara.—No limited cause can produce an unlimited effect. Atma-jnanam (knowledge of the self) being beyond cause and effect, is the only means to Mukti.

Thus it goes on, statement and counter-statement. The subjects become more and more subtle, the arguments take the highest flight of human intellect. God, the soul, the universe, their mutual relations, creation, Maya, these and a thousand other questions tax to the utmost the mental capacity of the great philosophers.

For hours the controversy goes on—two brilliant minds beautifully matched. Sometimes Mandan Misra seems to score a point. Then, again, Sankara, like a thunderbolt smashes the very foundation of his argument. With the sharp-edged sword of wisdom all relative truths are cut asunder, and the great truths of Vedanta prevail.

Mandan Misra's flower garland begins to wilt. But the old scholar does not give in till the last blossom withers. Then there is a great shout of triumph from Sankara's disciples. But Sankara silences them with a stern rebuke. He, himself, jumps to his feet, and with great humility bows down before his brilliant contestant, taking the dust of his feet.

"No, my son," Mandan Misra remonstrates, "it is for me to do this. It is for the disciple to do honour to his master. I feel proud to place myself at the feet of the greatest philosopher and seer of this age. It is my good fortune that we have met. Henceforth I respect you as my Guru. I am ready from this moment to follow you, and carry out your behest. This Ashrama, with all it contains I offer at your feet as Guru-dakshina (gift of a disciple to his Guru). Kindly deign to accept it. I see now that it is true, indeed, that 'other doctrines sink into silence when the Vedanta speaks, even as the yelp of a jackal is silenced when the lion roars.'"

Now it is written, that Ubhoy Bharati, the lady umpire, was no other than the incarnation of Saraswati, the goddess of learning. She had taken human birth to play her part on this occasion of the great debate. Now, her work on earth was finished, and a wonderful event took place.

A cloud of dazzling splendour slowly descended from the heavens, and enveloped her. Then, just as slowly the cloud ascends. And in the midst of this glory of light, the astonished spectators behold the goddess Saraswati, majestic, beautiful beyond compare. Ubhoy Bharati has vanished. Transfigured, gently she is carried aloft, back to Swarga, the abode of the gods.

Sankara resumes his journey. Mandan Misra, now named Sureswar by Sankara, is among the disciples who accompany him.

Later, he earned renown for himself as a great exponent of the Vedanta philosophy.

The party travels over the whole of India, preaching and teaching, converting whomsoever they met. Sankara also heals the sick, even raises the dead and many other miracles are ascribed to him. Of his travels many interesting episodes are recorded.

One day, passing through a village, Sankara hears of a boy, thirteen years old, who was behaving in a strange manner. In his infancy this boy, all on a sudden, refused to speak. Nothing could induce him to utter a sound. He was teased, he was coaxed, he was beaten. But it was all in vain. So they nicknamed him Hava (the dumb).

When Sankara passed through the village, the distressed father of the boy, thought, "This great Sannyasin is reputed to possess miraculous powers. Perhaps he can do something for my child." So he took the boy, and approaching Sankara, said, "Revered Sir, my son is sadly afflicted. He is a good boy, gentle and obedient. But he acts in a strange way. He does not want to speak. He never plays with the other boys; he sits quietly in a corner, indifferent to his surroundings. He never laughs, neither does he cry. He expresses neither joy nor sorrow. Perhaps a spirit obsesses him. I pray of you that you kindly have mercy on him and cure him."

Sankara looks at the boy fixedly. He takes him by the hand, smiles at him, and softly stroking his head, says very gently, "Well, my boy, tell me, who are you? What is your name? Why are you so silent?"

The boy looks up. He stares at Sankara for a moment. It is as if a thought enters his mind. An expression of wonder steals over his features. A new light shines in his eyes. He smiles; his whole attitude and bearing changes. He seems suddenly filled with joy. Then, to everyone's surprise, with his face lifted to Sankara, he chants in the sweetest voice:

I am not a boy, nor an angel, nor a ghost.

I am not a Brahmin, nor a Sudra—beyond caste.

I am not a Brahmacharin, nor householder, nor Sannyasin.

I am the effulgent one, the blissful one, the Spirit Divine.

I am the shining one, I know no grief.

I am Brahman, I am all being.

I am Existence, Knowledge and Bliss.

I am eternally free.

The father, amazed, looks on. This boy speaks! The long silence is broken! He embraces his son, holds him to his breast,

and with his voice trembling with joy, he cries out, to Sankara, "Sir what can I do to repay you for his blessing ! "

Sankara looks at the boy again, intently. Then he looks at the father, and says with great tenderness, " Sir, this boy belongs to me. He will never be happy in your home. You have been a good father to him. You are a pious, virtuous man, Therefore, this child was born in your home. But he has come to this world for a great purpose—to preach the Vedanta truth to suffering humanity. You wish to repay me ? Then give me your son, that his destiny may be fulfilled."

The father is downcast. Tears fill his eyes. The child, by regaining his speech, has, as it were, just been restored to him. Now he is requested to offer him up to a stranger, who will take him away for ever. What will the boy's mother say ? She will be heart-broken. He hesitates. He must have time to consider.

The following day, Sankara visits the parents at their cottage, and then he assures them that soon another boy will bless their home, and that boy will be to them a source of great happiness. With this assurance the parents at last consent. The boy is happy to become a Sannyasin, and to travel far and wide with his Guru, and, with Sankara's consent, he promises to see his parents again after twelve years.

Sankara blesses the parents. " No sacrifice," he tells them, " goes in vain. Great will be your reward. He who makes an offering to the Lord, receives in return a thousandfold."

Then, taking the boy by the hand, he says, "Now let us go. You have realized the Truth. Henceforth your name will be Hasthamalak, for as one possesses the Amalak-fruit by holding it firmly in the hand, so you possess God by holding Him firmly in your heart."

Thus, one by one, Sankara collects his great disciples who become his co-workers. When the greater part of the Indian plains had been converted to his views, there was still Kashmir left, in those days a land of great culture. There was in Kashmir a temple dedicated to the goddess Saraswati. It was the stronghold of learning. Seven gates, one after the other, led to the interior of the temple where the goddess resided. Each gate was watched over by a learned Pandit. Unless one was able to defeat these Pandits in debate, one was not allowed to pass through the gates. Sankara succeeded at one gate after the other, till he stood in the very presence of the goddess. One who could proceed so far, was considered unconquerable. So after this test, further victory came without much effort. Kashmir accepted him.

Sankara's work was now finished. He had written his commentaries and original works. He had preached the sublime teachings of Advaita Vedanta. He had vindicated the truth of the Vedas, "Brahman alone is real. Everything else is relative. The human soul is that Brahman ; not separate from It." It was now left for his disciples to protect the work.

Then came the last pilgrimage. Sankara went into the Himalayas. At the foot of a snow-capped peak he blessed his disciples, and old them to follow him no farther.

This was the last ever seen or heard of the great sage. At thirty years of age, from Himalayan snow peak, he entered into Bliss.

But Sankara's work is still living. His commentaries and other writings are read and studied by scholars in the East and in the West and his Advaita doctrine has never been surpassed. It represents the highest pinnacle of thought ever reached by the human intellect.

(Concluded.)

NEWS AND REPORTS

BIRTH DAY CELEBRATION OF BHAGAVAN SRI RAMAKRISHNA AT MADRAS

The Ninety Third Birthday Anniversary of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated at the Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras with due pomp and ceremony. The Tithi Puja which came off on the 23rd of February was observed with great fervour and devotion by the monks and the devotees. On that day through the calm silence of the early morning rose the sweet music of Indian pipes and drum reminding people of the advent, about a century ago, of Sri Ramakrishna, the divine Master. This was followed by the chorus devotional songs sung by the monks in glory of the great Master. This over, at 9 a. m., the boys of the R. K. Mission Students' Home congregated in the spacious Hall of the Math and chanted the Veda-Mantram for a long time, which surcharged the atmosphere with piety and devotion. Puja and Homa, offerings and distribution of Prasadam and feeding of the devotees formed some of the other items of the function.

On the 26th of February, the day of the Public Celebration, the monks and the devotees had a very busy time of it. From the day preceding the 26th all were busy in decorating the Math premises with all that augur the approach of an auspicious ceremony. From the gate right up to the Hall, all through, hung garlands of various kinds. On the east of the Hall stood the dais of Sri Guru Maharaj whereon shone forth a full size enlarged portrait of the Master in Samadhi posture in the midst of offerings of flowers and sacred leaves.

The fragrance of the incense and sandal dust that were burnt accompanied with the sweet, melodious voice of devotional songs in accompaniment of musical instruments of diverse kinds—all these but inspired devotion in all present. In the fore-noon like the previous occasions a large number of poor Narayanas were given food—one full meal and enough each. Besides the whole day distribution of Prasadam, as many as four hundred devotees partook of the dinner. In the evening, after a lecture in Tamil on “Sri Ramakrishna” by Mr. Tirukural Kuppuswami Mudaliar, Mr. K. S. Ramaswami Sastri, formerly the Acting District Judge of Trichinopoly read a paper in English on “Sri Ramakrishna, as an Incarnation of the Indian Genius” with the Hon’ble Sir. C. P. Ramaswami Iyer, the Law Member of the Madras Government in the chair.

The first part of Mr. Sastri’s learned paper is published elsewhere; and the remaining portions are also expected to appear in these pages later on. While laying much stress on the importance of the message of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda on the revival of the Indian national life and culture, the President said that unlike many other prophets and reformers these twain personalities could not jump out of their skin. They were part of the spirit of their country. Jesus and Mahomed came to protest against the spirit of the people where they were born. But Sri Ramakrishna was an exception to this: he was the perfection of Indian spirit. To those who criticised India as the land of many irreconcilable faiths the speaker would say that the unity of life established by Bose in the scientific sphere had been established in the spiritual sphere long ago. Indians were not inert. Indians were once great and glorious and their kings were great not because of their earthly belongings and power but because of their culture and religion. In his travel from Kashmir to Kanyakumari, from Sind to Bengal, the speaker found a cultural unity amongst the people of India. In spite of the strong caste question, it is in India alone where a Paraiyah saint like Sri Nandanar is honoured and worshipped by all irrespective of caste and creed, high and low. The speaker concluded by pointing out the great service that is being rendered by the Ramakrishna Mission for the revival of Indian culture and civilization in this great land of ours and also for spreading India’s message broadcast in countries outside India.

BIRTH DAY CELEBRATION AT OTHER PLACES

The blessed Day was observed with great devotion and enthusiasm in many places in India and abroad. We have received information from different places. Below are given some

205/VED



52839

The Ramakrishna Math and Mission Head Quarters, Belur, Bengal, witnessed a vast concourse of pilgrims. The number was estimated at exceeding a lac and a half, beating all previous records. Of this not less than a quarter of a lac partook of the sacred Prasad without any distinction of caste and creed at the dining camp, besides petty distribution in hands to a large proportion of the pilgrims. Bhajan, Kirtan and concerts by different parties, free distribution of cold drink, tea and other kinds of eatables by generous persons formed some of the important items of the great festival. The spacious grounds of the monastery was surrounded on all hands by steam boats, motor buses, cars and carriages, country boats and rickshaws, besides hundreds of foot-trotters. More than a thousand volunteers rendered their service in different capacities.

The Ramakrishna Mission Society, Rangoon convened a crowded meeting in the Reddiar Hall with Prof. Jevons of the Rangoon University in the chair. In the course of their address Bhikku Prajnanda said that Sri Ramakrishna was the embodiment of the Vedanta, and Messrs. S. K. Sengupta and I. B. Mazumdar remarked that Sri Ramakrishna came at a moment when Indians were fast forgetting the glory of their culture and civilization and that the Master's life was a conciliation ground of a series of contradiction.

The Ramakrishna Mission, Jaffna, Ceylon, arranged a public meeting where Mr. M. S. Rasaratnam and Principal S. N. Pillai spoke on the life and teachings of the great Master, with Swami Avinashananda in the chair. The President remarked, the service of man is the service of God on earth.

The Ramakrishna Ashrama, Ootacamund fed thirteen hundred poor Narayanas and a number of devotees. In a meeting lectures were delivered in Tamil and English by the friends and the Swamis of the Math, Mr. K. S. Ramaswami Gounden of Tiruppur presiding.

This special feature at the Sri Ramakrishna Niranjana Ashrama, Ottapalam, S. Malabar, was that at the invitation of some of the caste Hindus, the untouchables, Cherumas and Paraiyahs, had the privilege for the first time to go before the shrine to offer prayers to God. They were also told that they would be welcome there any day of the year to offer their worship and prayers. After a procession with the portraits of Sri Ramakrishna on elephants' back, the poor and the devotees were sumptuously fed. In the evening the Nambudiri children performed prayers.

The Sri Ramakrishna Math, Nettayam, Trivandrum, fed about twelve hundred Daridra Narayanas, over and above a large number of Bhaktas. In the meeting presided over by Mr. Bhaskara

Menon, District Judge, lectures were delivered in Malayalam and English by the Swamis and the friends of the Math.

The Birth-day was also celebrated at the Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama Bangalore ; Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama Haripad, Malabar ; Sri Ramakrishna Math, Netrumpalli, N. Arcot; Sri Ramakrishna Mission Sevashram Kankhal ; The Ramakrishna Mission Sevashram, Lucknow ; The Ramakrishna Mission Barisal ; Sri Ramakrishna Math, Dacca ; Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Gopalganj, Faridpur. The devotees of Palghat, Malabar, also observed the holy Day. The devotees of Vizianagram fed four hundred poor people of the town, and at a meeting resolved to start a permanent Ashrama named 'Sri Ramakrishna Math.'

SWAMI AVINASHANANDA'S VISIT TO TELUGU DISTRICTS

In response to an invitation from Guntur, Swami Avinashananda left Madras for Guntur on the 25th January. At Guntur he delivered three public lectures on "Service and God-realisation," "The Message of Swami Vivekananda" and "Sri Ramakrishna's Mission." He delivered an address to the students and also held several informal meetings at friends' houses. After a stay of few days, he left Guntur for Bezwada where his programme included separate lectures for ladies and gentlemen and also informal conversations. At both the places the public evinced much interest in the work and ideals of the Mission. Previous to this tour the Swami also visited Rajahmundry and a few other places and delivered some lectures.

SWAMI YATISWARANANDA'S VISIT TO TRICHUR

In connection with the thirteenth Annual Conference of the Vivekodayam Samajam, Trichur, Cochin State, to celebrate the Birthday Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda, Swami Yatiswarananda, President, Sri Ramakrishna Math and Mission, Madras, visited Trichur, at the invitation of the Samajam. The Swami delivered a series of three lectures on "The Meaning and Purpose of Religion", "Message of the Gita" and "Mission of Sri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda", the first on the 1st March and the second and the third on the 2nd March. The Swami took part in opening the Flower-Show and Exhibition, Distribution of Prizes, etc, during the four days of the Conference.

On his way back to Madras, the Swami presided over the Birthday Anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna Deva at Tiruppur on the 11th March and delivered a lecture on the life and message of the great Master. After a fortnight's tour the Swami returned to Madras on the morning of the 13th March last,

Menon, District Judge, lectures were delivered in Malayalam and English by the Swamis and the friends of the Math.

The Birth-day was also celebrated at the Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama Bangalore ; Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama Haripad, Malabar ; Sri Ramakrishna Math, Netrumpalli, N. Arcot; Sri Ramakrishna Mission Sevashram Kankhal ; The Ramakrishna Mission Sevashram, Lucknow ; The Ramakrishna Mission Barisal ; Sri Ramakrishna Math, Dacca ; Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Gopalganj, Faridpur. The devotees of Palghat, Malabar, also observed the holy Day. The devotees of Vizianagram fed four hundred poor people of the town, and at a meeting resolved to start a permanent Ashrama named ' Sri Ramakrishna Math. '

SWAMI AVINASHANANDA'S VISIT TO TELUGU DISTRICTS

In response to an invitation from Guntur, Swami Avinashananda left Madras for Guntur on the 25th January. At Guntur he delivered three public lectures on " Service and God-realisation," " The Message of Swami Vivekananda " and " Sri Ramakrishna's Mission." He delivered an address to the students and also held several informal meetings at friends' houses. After a stay of few days, he left Guntur for Bezwada where his programme included separate lectures for ladies and gentlemen and also informal conversations. At both the places the public evinced much interest in the work and ideals of the Mission. Previous to this tour the Swami also visited Rajahmundry and a few other places and delivered some lectures.

SWAMI YATISWARANANDA'S VISIT TO TRICHUR

In connection with the thirteenth Annual Conference of the Vivekodayam Samajam, Trichur, Cochin State, to celebrate the Birthday Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda, Swami Yatiswarananda, President, Sri Ramakrishna Math and Mission, Madras, visited Trichur, at the invitation of the Samajam. The Swami delivered a series of three lectures on "The Meaning and Purpose of Religion", "Message of the Gita" and "Mission of Sri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda", the first on the 1st March and the second and the third on the 2nd March. The Swami took part in opening the Flower-Show and Exhibition, Distribution of Prizes, etc, during the four days of the Conference.

On his way back to Madras, the Swami presided over the Birthday Anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna Deva at Tiruppur on the 11th March and delivered a lecture on the life and message of the great Master. After a fortnight's tour the Swami returned to Madras on the morning of the 13th March last,

